THE

SYSTEM.

A

POEM.

WITH

NOTES.

IN FIVE BOOKS.

By the Rev. JOSEPH WISE,

Rector of Penhurſt, Suſſex, and Curate of Poplar, Middleſex.

VOL. I.

Ο προκαταγιγνωσκων δε πριν ακουσαι σαφως,
Αυτος πονηρος εστι, πιστευσας κακως.

MENANDER.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR:

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ALEXANDER.

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Page	5.	Line 32.	*for* deterred *read* deterr'd
	12.	—— 14.	*put reference* (6.)
	20.	——	*in the note, after* creating *add* out of nothing; *and after* create *add* out of nothing.
	40.	—— 31.	*read* triumph!—Liberty
	49.	—— 16.	*for* σημειοσικη *read* σημειοτικη
	53.	—— 18.	*for* tranſcendant *read* tranſcendent
	56.	—— 5, 6,	*dele* ( )
	68.	—— 31.	*after* line *put* ,
	78.	—— 10.	*after* revelation *put* ;
	80.	—— 25.	*for* βαλεντηριω *put* βυλευτηριω,
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	81.	—— 17.	*after* περιμενει *put* ,
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THE SYSTEM.

BOOK I.

CREATION's ſcenes while, penſive, I ſurvey,
Where ſot and ſage with vague opinion ſtray;
While through the gloom, as ſuccours light, I try
The moſt profound concernments to deſcry;
Studious to fill my function as I ought;
To teach, when firſt ingenuouſly taught;
And, for God's glory and man's good, make known
Truth, truth ſincere, with beſt aſſurance ſhown;
And while, through ſearch, truth riſes on my ſight,
Till the reſult evinces—all is right,
Right in the ſcheme of God;—though much be wrong
Through ſin, all rightneſs ſtill with Him is ſtrong;
Juſt as the rightneſs evident appears,
Methinks a ſceptic thus accoſts mine ears:

" Preacher profeſt—of God, his works, and laws,—
" I call thee to aſſert thy Maſter's cauſe.

" His miniſter anointed if thou art,
" This taſk is thy inviolable part:
" Come on; diſcloſe what overſhadow'd lies;
" Prove him all-good, all-mighty, and all-wiſe.
" This conſcious Being probably muſt be
" Endleſs, in happineſs or miſery.
" Deriv'd or ſelf-exiſtent be it thought,
" Annihilation ſcarcely will be wrought.
" If God created it, will he deſtroy?
" If not, how can he? If he can, yet why?
" Endleſs exiſtence is a ſerious view;
" And muſe I muſt of what is to enſue.
" To judge, I earneſtly deſire to know
" What is the origin of bliſs and woe; (1)*
" To know, if all we hope and fear depend
" On God or fate, or enemy or friend.

" A ſov'reign cauſe I gladly would allow
" All-wiſe, all-mighty, and all-good; but how?
" See human nature warp'd with bias, prone
" To break thoſe laws, which all as ſacred own! (2)
" See all degrees of life oppreſs'd with pain!
" Divine perfections ſeem extoll'd in vain!"

Alas! ſhall man, ſo feeble and ſo blind,
Without heav'n's aid, preſume the truth to find?
The king of glory once unveil his light,
The marvel'd plan emerges wholly right:
Rightly the pow'rs, which good and evil frame,
From perfect wiſdom, might, and goodneſs came.
When, by his light, appears how evil roſe
In ſin, the natural harbinger of woes;

* The figures inſerted in the courſe of the Poem, refer to the Notes at the end, which have correſponding numbers prefixed.

How

How God, forgiving, labours to replace
What we pervert; (ſtupendous in his grace!)
All his grand counſels to reform addreſs'd;
(For man muſt firſt be righteous to be bleſs'd); (3)
Dubious unhallow'd thoughts perplex no more;
Proſtrate with faith, high-praiſing we adore.

From God the ſyſtem roſe, entire in all
Virtue and bliſs; but liable to fall.
Beſtowing life, with liberty endu'd,
He free obedience claim'd for perfect good;
That perfect good might by obedience ſtay,
Or might by diſobedience paſs away:
Since pleas'd him most probation to
[redacted] *intend,*
To ſerve his glory, as the ſovereign end.
*If will had virtue free from vice maintain'd,**
Bliſs free from woe, would endleſsly have reign'd:
But will, deceding, made perverſion grow,
Inducing vice, provoking doom to woe:
Will *is the* origin, *falſe will alone,*
Of all the evil in creation known.

Evil, thus brought, ſhall in probation's courſe†
Spread with heredial and promiſcuous force,
Till retribution, to adjuſt prepar'd,
Deal individually due reward.
This ſuits probation's fall: the fleeting pain
Conſpires to retribution's endleſs gain:
Like ſtripes of love, lo, probative pain, death
Warn from retributive—the ſtrokes of wrath.

* *Virtue* is an healthy temper of the ſoul; or a right moral diſpoſition of the faculties and affections, by which the ſoul is enabled and inclined to free purſuit of duty; and ſo duly to produce and preſerve moral and natural good. *Vice* is the contrary. Gen. 1. Wiſd. Sol. i. Rom. v. 12. 2 Cor. xv. 21.

† Rom. 8, 20. &c.

For retribution the grand cloſe muſt be,
With ſettled happineſs or miſery.

Offence in one a curſe to many gave;
Deſert in one with grace will many ſave.
God calls to good in life and death, now laid
In our probation; granting gracious aid.
In retribution all, who well explore,
He will redeem from evil evermore;
And will the reſt, who his beheſts contemn,
To farther evil evermore condemn.
His diſpenſations thus, by hate and love
Becoming him, will his high glory prove.

Such is the plan in revelation's view;
* Nature accords, and reaſon pleads it true.†

I. "No! (you reply) Can reaſon e'er admit
"The works of God could fall from ſtate complete?
"God muſt the order, he beſtow'd, maintain,
"Nor ſee his ſacred purpoſe render'd vain;
"If God maintains the order he beſtows,
"Creation is as perfect as it roſe.

"Evil, 'tis true, ſeems ſomewhat ſtrange to join
"With full perfection in a work divine;
"But private ill (ſome wits have underſtood)
"Muſt needs exiſt, as baſe for public good."

* The word *nature* (like the correſponding terms in Latin and Greek) is applied very extenſively, and rather variouſly. It always ſignifies *being and manner of being:* it is applied to ſignify *all things or any thing, in any manner.* It is uſed of ſubſtances, as God and his works; and of non-ſubſtances, as time and ſpace; and of modes, actions, paſſions, ideas, and whatever the mind conſiders as having *being* and *manner* of being. In the ſenſe of *being*, here intended, *nothing* as well as *ſomething* is conſidered as *being*, or as an object of the mind's perception.

† Tertullian. de Teſtim. Animæ.

A wit-

A witleſs paradox! On pain and guilt,
Dire negatives of good, muſt good be built?
The raſh conceit thoſe wits from folly ſtole.
What! Parts have faults, to make a faultleſs whole?
To give the public welfare ſtrength to ſtand,
Muſt there be lazars alm'd, and traitors bann'd?
Muſt the exiſtence of a thing rely,
On ſuch a cauſe as muſt the thing deſtroy?
Diſcord be harmony, and darkneſs light,
All contradiction true, and wrong all right?

Say what neceſſity led God to place
His work of good on evil, as its baſe?
What fate diſcern we, or in great or ſmall,
That good muſt flow from ill, or not at all?
Quite, quite reverſe! We ſee, God muſt exclude
Evil from all, if perfectly endu'd:
Ever, as good exiſts, muſt evil ceaſe;
And, but as abſent evil, good has peace.
Why boaſt the good reſults of ſin and pain?
Boaſt health through ſickneſs! But what caus'd the gain?
It was not ſickneſs made good health to riſe;
'Twas ſtrength, ſubduing ſickneſs, health ſupplies:
Did not ſubduing ſtrength ſupply the joy,
Prevailing ſickneſs would all health deſtroy.
And, whate'er good through ſickneſs health receive,
Health, never ſick, might good more perfect give.
So ſin and pain occaſion good; but ſtill,
Not cauſe: 'tis caus'd by what converts their ill.
From ſin no good, but what's coerc'd to flow
In ſpite of ſin, by ſome auſpicious law:
No good from pain, unleſs the mind from ſin
Thereby deterr'd, ſuperior virtue win.
From them good comes not; but from good employ
Of pow'rs which tend their evil to deſtroy.

Ceaſe the effects of ſalutary ſway,
Their evil operates good's entire decay.
And when [redacted] occaſion they present ſome cauſe
To operate good effects, each inſtance ſhows,
Good equal, yea ſuperior, might be ſhown,
Did virtue, happineſs, exiſt alone.
Each jot of ſin and pain is ſo much coſt
Of virtue, happineſs, infring'd and loſt.
Then we conclude, no reaſon can appear,
Why ſin and pain with good ſhould interfere,
Except for moral views, by which ſin may
Intrude, and pain be ſent to curſe its way.
Only for theſe can ſin and pain be fit:
And for theſe only God would them admit.
An obvious reaſon ſhews, on ſuch deſign,
Evil no derogance from pow'r divine.
In things, through ſin and pain of good devoid,
God's glory ſhines; be ſinners ev'n deſtroy'd:
As in a culprit's doom, the tragic ſight
Diſplays the majeſty of moral right.

Why ſo alert, with toilſome ſtudy vain,
Groundleſs abſurd hypotheſes to feign,
When fair reveal'd is truth, to reaſon plain?
Why, but from ſtrong propenſion to invent
Pleas, to treat ſacred doctrines with diſſent?
Search ev'ry plea, yet find at laſt you ſhall,
That the revealed is the rational.

Evil and good quite arbitrary ſhow;
Join'd are, or ſingle, as will God beſtow.
Evil would not have been, did he intend
Creation's good to be its ſovereign end;
But, ſince his glory is the end of all,
And aſks probation, free were things to fall;

Virtue

Virtue by ſin, and happineſs by pain:
Still (thank his grace) with proſpect to regain.
Beſt it would be, had the creation ſtood
As it was made, by vigilance for good,
By virtue ſuch, that evil could not come:
Then pure were good, and larger were its ſum.
Well it will be, if things their pow'rs employ
Both ſin and pain to baffle and deſtroy,
That good, ſo ſadly loſt, may be by grace
Amply reſtor'd, to laſt, in future place.

You vainly argue, that creation's frame
Muſt keep its order conſtantly the ſame.
Far more auguſt the view! The total range
Muſt change in ſeaſons, ſuiting morals' change;
Muſt, in accordance with God's moral views,
Riſe in perfection, or perfection loſe.
Author and arbiter, he ought to bend
His works by changes to his ſov'reign end.
They could not have perfection to that aim,
Could they not loſe perfection in their frame.
Perfect through imperfection things muſt be
To that great end, if ſinning thoſe born free.
'Tis plain! We their perfection thus define,
To their own good, and *to their chief deſign*.*

* This ought to be well attended to: it ſolves the difficulty in this queſtion. Many perſons, when their enquiry is about *perfection*, are puzzled by different and uncertain uſes of the word, and a confuſion of ideas, for want of proper diſtinctions. Be it noted, that by *perfection* is always meant *a fitneſs of ſomething to an end*. As *ends* are various, ſo muſt be the *perfections*, relative to them; and ſometimes the perfections may be of a nature to exiſt together, and ſometimes not; for ſometimes the exiſtence of perfection to one end requires the non-exiſtence of perfection to another end. This is exemplified in the caſe before us. The creation may be conceived to have perfection to its own good, and perfection to a further end, viz. the

One

One may be valid and the other null:
Fitneſs to both is their perfection full.
Perfection to their chief deſign muſt ſtill
Exiſt, let changes happen as they will.
Perfection to their good muſt fall, to ſerve
Their chief deſign, from duty if they ſwerve;
In thoſe two points muſt fall, which they poſſeſs
On moral terms; in virtue happineſs.
Conſider this! If free-born ſons will err,
Vice will commence; then pain be to deter;
And be to puniſh thoſe, who prone rebel,
'Till bliſs of heav'n expire in woes of hell.
So juſtice bids, ſo wiſdom muſt intend,
To ſerve God's glory, the moſt ſacred end.

Frailty and vice, and each abhorr'd decay,
Declare perfection forfeited away. (4)
Reaſon concludes, if faithfully its plan
Creation follow'd, pure as it began,
It would from vice, from woe, be wholly free;
Since good the cauſe, whoſe fiat made it be;
Since wiſe, the ways of goodneſs well to know;
Since pow'rful, utmoſt goodneſs to beſtw;
Since, too, a ſyſtem, all in virtue bleſt,
Would beam the ſplendour of his glory beſt.
And revelation, quaſhing all diſſents,
Stamps firm aſſurance on theſe arguments:

ſervice of God, at the ſame time, if it continue obedient; but, if diſobedient, perfection to its own good muſt fail, in ſubſervience to its perfection to the great end, the ſervice of God. Thus a malefactor, maimed for his crimes, loſes his perfection to his own good, that he may be perfectly conformed to a ſuperior end, that of juſtice. The fall, contended for, in the creation, is nothing more than is agreeable to analogy in ſimilar caſes, and to the beſt knowledge, we have, of the natures of God and his creatures. See note, numbered 4, at the end of this Book I.

He

He gave perfection, ev'n a ſtate of good,
In which no evil can be underſtood.
As the celeſtial orbs, in cloudleſs night,
Are, to their magnitudes, replete with light;
So, in perfection, good, through great and ſmall,
To their recipiences, replenish all.
Could God produce creation as it is,
More vice than virtue, and more woe than bliſs?
To ſay, he did, by abſolute decree,
His creatures bind in ſin and miſery;
That is, conſtrain'd them to abuſe his boon,
Deride his laws, and ev'n himſelf diſown;
And rack'd them, faultleſs, with ſuch dreadful pain,
That life experienc'd few would wiſh again;
Or to ſay, evil muſt be underſtood
Needful as baſis to the public good,
So fatally, ſo needful, that, paſt doubt,
The pow'r of God could not ſucceed without;
Is, with preſumption, ſcorning ſenſe and dread,
To ſay juſt aught that fumes in folly's head.
Such thoughts their own abſurdity expreſs;
As reaſon from its nature, muſt confeſs.
No reas'ner ſane, who dreads or ſcorns t'aſſert,
With impious tongue, what he denies at heart,
Can ſay, "Creation knows no fall: 'tis in
"Perfection, as it did, and ſhould begin."*
It is imperfect; though not God in want
Of pow'r or will, perfection to implant.

* It may be alledged, that God created things in a ſtate of imperfection (as they are) for the ſake of trial; becauſe ſuch ſtate of imperfection is found to ſuit that end. I anſwer, that to this we muſt not aſſent; becauſe a ſtate of perfection, liable to fall, ſuits that end equally well; and is more probable, as well as aſſured by revelation. It may be aſked, as ſomewhat material to the point, how is God juſtifiable in creating a ſyſtem ſo fallible. This ſhall be conſidered in its proper place, when we come to ſpeak particularly of the *creation's principal end*.

Sin, too ſufficient cauſe, brought vice and pain,
All we name *evil*, all whence we complain.
God muſt be juſt; of courſe, from ſin muſt flow,
By his eternal ſentence, vice and woe.
What is, is right; all perfect as they ſhou'd;
Becauſe God keeps, and they abandon good.

II. "But, you rejoin, evil, as ſome debate,
"Taints all created, by eſſential fate.
"Good, they confeſs, is not on evil built:
"But with it link'd, whence needs is pain, is guilt."

Abſurd! As if *created* did imply
Neceſſity of ſin and miſery.
Prove the poſition.—"Yes, the proof is clear:
"The ſcene before us ſtrikes conviction here.
"Of ſyſtems poſſible, if 'tis confeſt,
"The ſovereign Being muſt create the beſt,
"What is is beſt; yet evil blended ſee!
"Plain proof, He cannot good from evil free.
"If good exiſt, of conſequence muſt ill:
"Good univerſal is impoſſible."

Concluded wrong. It muſt be too confeſt,
In ſyſtems, will's eſſential to the beſt.
By will into the beſt may much be brought,
Evil or good, which elſe exiſt would not.
The ſcene before us ſtrikes conviction ſtrong,
That will has grand effects, both right and wrong.
Advert to theſe; and from the ſight believe,
That beyond ſight it does more grand achieve.
Will brought all evil: ſcripture, reaſon, ſtill
Evil impute to wrong-exerted will.

Were it not ſo, diſgrace would fix, and blame,
On the great Being, hallow'd be whoſe name.
Neceſſity of evil ſhould things have,
Which bar he could not, if he being gave;
Nay, if, though pow'rful evil to exclude,
Yet being give, but willing it intrude,
He ſhould neceſſity of evil lay,
Except what will induce through trial may,
'Tis likely, all, into exiſtence brought,
Might better have for ever ſlept in nought.
To God what glory, to his works what gain,
From a creation bound in guilt (5) and pain,
Without reſpect to ſuch high moral laws,
As honour both the creatures and their cauſe?
So bound, it might its evil ever bear:
What room to hope releaſement here or there,
Want deem'd in God of either pow'r or care?
Be good preponderant, evil aught, ſo laid,
Muſt God of weakneſs or abuſe upbraid:
How more, if, after cloſely ſearching round,
No wiſh'd prepond'rance of good be found!

Will, moral will, ſolves all. If we ſuppoſe,
From fault of moral will the miſchief roſe!
We ſee it ought; we learn that ſin is baſe,
Of God abhorr'd, and blaſted from his face.
Warn'd, we avoid, repent; devout, confeſs
The ſovereign wiſdom, pow'r, and holineſs.
How far reverſe, ſuppoſing it from want
Of pow'r in God perfection to implant;
Or want of care; or proneneſs to torment?
Then ſwell our breaſts with all irreverent;
Ill thoughts, ill appetites, reject controul;
With mighty plea ſin riots in the ſoul.

Scan well our tenets! How diverſe in view!
What ſerious moment to embrace the true!
Solemnly reaſon, revelation ſhow,
Vaſt is the import evil's ſource to know.

Know then, that moral will muſt mix with fate
In every ſyſtem, to give worth elate;
And though ſuch will, through guilt *may* good confound,
Yet ſyſtem free outvieth ſyſtem bound.
That which is beſt, through freedom muſt outvie:
Both excellence and bane in freedom lie.
None wholly fatal can be beſt; no view,
Divinely ſplendid, can from ſuch accrue:
Trial from creatures it muſt quite explode;
Of courſe, much uſe of holineſs from God. (6.)
Allow that good through ſuch a ſyſtem flow,
To the ſublimeſt height mere fate can go,
Theſe to explode muſt be confeſs'd unfit:
The ſyſtem beſt, 'tis plain, muſt theſe admit.
That muſt be beſt, which beſt admits to be
The nobleſt pow'rs befitting each degree;
And which, of conſequence, reflects the rays
Of God's own glory with divineſt blaze.
Such muſt be that, where freedom in its prime
Makes room for nobleſt pow'rs, with laws the moſt ſublime.
Since, doubtleſs, holineſs muſt be diſplay'd
In God, and virtue in his works aſſay'd,
Will muſt be given; and free muſt be its choice
To good and ill, to virtue and to vice; (7)
And ſo, neceſſity of good or ill
Reſult with morals, uſe, abuſe, of will.

From will, thus moral, ſince is underſtood,*
A poſſibility of ill and good,
Whether exiſt ſhould both, or *only* one,
Might reſt at firſt with creature's will alone.
On uſe of will, if God muſt bliſs beſtow;
He muſt diſtinguiſh its abuſe with woe:
So moral will, without unmoral fate,
Might the beſt ſyſtem bring to bad eſtate.
Thus all is eaſy: feign not to ſurmiſe
Evil by fate muſt from *creating* riſe.

1. Others the bane not to *creating* lay:
Matter and God's accommodance plead they.
"Out of uncauſed matter, it is ſaid,
"The ſolid fabric of the world was made:
"Which matter, rigid, baffling God's controul,
"Could not, excluding pain, unite with ſoul:
"Eſſential then to union muſt be pain:
"The which yet few for many may ſuſtain:
"God therefore gave a bias to each ſoul,
"That part might ſin, and ſuffer juſtly for the whole."

Notions how ſtrange! Defect muſt marr in part
The work divine, from want of pow'r or art:
Pleaſure to ſome require to others pain:
Neither can God without oppreſſion reign.

* *Will* is made moral by being joined with *ſenſe*, which is capable of diſtinguiſhing right from wrong in *morals* or *manners*, and conſcious of *merit* or *demerit* deſerving reward or puniſhment as right or wrong is purſued. This *moral ſenſe* (as it is rightly called) judges of right and wrong in *morals*, or free deſires and actions, by comparing them with *moral laws*, or thoſe commands or fitneſſes of relation in things, which for probation are ſet to be obeyed or diſobeyed freely in ſuch deſires and actions; and which, according to obedience or diſobedience, imply merit or demerit for which the agent is accountable, and liable to reward or puniſhment.

Reaſonleſs

Reaſonleſs blaſphemy! how could it riſe,
Unleſs ſuggeſted by the fire of lies?
God, you confeſs, at pleaſure modell'd ſoul;
Why then did matter baffle his controul?
Could he not equally to good have wrought
Things of ſolidity, as things of thought?
Or, grant he could not; grant, he fail'd to fit
Matter to ſoul, then why not ſoul to it?
If rigid matter ſome diſorder gain,
Wherefore muſt ſoul in conſequence feel pain?
Or grant it muſt; why then muſt union be?
Where lies the abſolute neceſſity?
Or if there muſt be union, and the part
Combin'd with matter bear for all the ſmart;
The fatal lot of pain how could he deal,
That ſinners might, and only ſinners, feel?
If ſinn'd too many, guilt muſt ſcape its due;
And probity be puniſh'd, if too few.
Nay, farther queſtion, when the world was made,
Where could the pain at firſt be juſtly laid?
Who ſinn'd before exiſtence? or at firſt
Were ſome unmeritedly made accurſt?
God would exclude, you ſay, yet heightens ill,
By weak'ning part with bias put on will,
That thoſe, to hide his failings with pretence,
May ſin, and ſuffer for loſt innocence.
Thus holy God muſt ſinful creatures need;
Poſition ſhocking to the wiſe man's creed.*
Profane abſurdity! If for the reſt
A part muſt ſuffer to make all as bleſt
As poſſible, *they* ought to be the beſt,

* *Say not thou he hath cauſed me to err: for he hath no need of the ſinful man.* Ecclus. xv. 12, 20.

Active

Active to hinder evil, as they cou'd;
Chearfully ſuffering for the public good.
Your doctrines ſeem devis'd with purpoſe ſtrong,
At any rate to baffle right with wrong;
Only for oddneſs and profaneneſs pleaſe;
Ridiculous for inconſiſtencies.

Some add, "Such numbers God could not create
"Perfectly bleſt, in ſyſtematic ſtate:
"In ſo large numbers part muſt be oppreſs'd
"By mere ſubordination to the reſt."
Why then ſuch numbers? Rather be a few
Completely happy. "No, you trifle now:
"The more the better." Why? "Why! ſir, for this—
"Increaſe of numbers increaſe is of bliſs."
Rather, on your hypotheſis, maintain,
Increaſe of numbers increaſe is of pain.

Bluſh, bigots! bluſh, for your incongruous ſchemes!
Faithleſs in facts, and credulous in dreams!
Who can believe the nonſenſe you impart?
Nothing ſo weak, except a wicked heart!

Subordination! thence if evil ſprings,
Why oft are ſubjects happier than kings?
Brutes than mankind? Why oft may ev'n a flea,
In point of pleaſure, caſt contempt at thee?
Subordination, in or laſt or firſt,
Implies preciſely neither bleſt nor curſt:
It but implies that order in the frame,
Which makes a ſyſtem's nature, whence its name.

But, ſad diſaſter! freedom why not ſpurn'd?
Admitting *it*, your ſcheme is ſelf-o'erturn'd:

Admitting freedom, evil needs not fate
To be its ſource; it needs but only that:
Its ſource *is* that, as ſounds the voice divine;
Reaſon and nature in the chorus join.

2. Your ſcheme of cauſeleſs matter go extend
To ſpirit too: it will not ſerve your end.
Give it the moſt advantage it can bear, (8)
It will fallaciouſly requite your care.
Let us ſuppoſe (for ſuppoſition's free:
Ne'er reck how badly things therewith agree:
Though things look quite repugnant, yet ſuppoſe,)
Primordials all exiſt without a cauſe: (9)
And let them be ſuppos'd in all points ſuch
As your ſcheme needs; which is ſuppoſing much.
Suppoſe them various, ev'n more various far,
Than beings known, compounded of them, are:
Some quality'd for body, ſome for mind;
And ſome with virtue, ſome with vice inclin'd;
Some capable of pleaſure, ſome of pain;
And needing ſyſtem, their beſt ſtate to gain;
But rigid ſo againſt conſummate good,
As that no pow'r could evil thence exclude:
Then, by the caſe, though God his pow'r moſt high
For their beſt ſtate moſt ſtrenuouſly apply,
Yet not to his good will could they be built;
But to their own bad fate of pain and guilt:
Vice, blindneſs, pain, muſt be the fixed fault
Of ſenſe, unframable to what it ought,
To perfect happineſs and rules of right:
And will muſt meddle, maugre ſov'reign might.
But ſurely ſuch a creed, on no pretence,
Can man embrace, without renouncing ſenſe.

Allowing

Allowing *it*, as well may be allow'd,
Things rang'd themſelves; or by themſelves thus ſtood
Eternally. To that your ſcheme will fall.
Ye, but for decency, own God at all.

The ſerious queſtion is, does aught imply
Such an invincible neceſſity?
Quite the reverſe. To man's moſt ſearching thought,
When every point to ſtricteſt teſt is brought,
No ſhadow ſhews it, no minuteſt ſign;
All pleads for God his abſolute deſign.

But, leſt we ſtumble on, forever dark,
With cloſer inqueſt things diſtinctly mark:
Study the things, ally'd to this debate;
And then pronounce of Freedom and of Fate.
Things, and not fancies, ought to be our guide:
When things abſcond, we ought not to decide.
Freedom is that, by which an object *may*
Self-moving act, and vary in its way:
And *Fate* is that, by which an object *muſt*
Exiſt, act, ſuffer, in one tenour juſt.
Since both are modes, we muſt, to know them well,
Rightly inſpect the objects, where they dwell.
Theſe modes, like others, diff'rently appear,
As differ objects, in which they inhere.
Freedom to *ſubſtance* only appertains;
But fate in *ſubſtance*, *time* and *ſpace* remains;
Alſo in *fitneſs* whence all laws accrue
To all, that's fit; and in *unfitneſs* too.
Fate is in ſubſtance ſeen of diff'rent race
From that in laws of fitneſs, time and ſpace;
For in time, ſpace, and laws, the mode, call'd *fate*,
Has, like thoſe objects, an eternal ſtate,

Which we name *poſitive*; ev'n ſuch, that they
Can by no thought *imagin'd be away:* (10)
In ſubſtance 'tis but *extant*; for we ſee,
Subſtance can be *imagin'd not to be:*
This I name *extant*, ſince it does exiſt,
Yet can be fancy'd out of being's liſt.
But mark, what's extant, ever muſt endure,
If extant no annihilating pow'r:
Subſtance, which is, muſt be, if it enjoy
Being, no ſubſtance can or will deſtroy.
All ſubſtance, by an eminential grace
Diſtinguiſh'd is from fitneſs, time and ſpace,
The grace of *pow'r*; diſtinction this ſublime!
No pow'r belongs to fitneſs, ſpace or time.
Since ſubſtance ſole has pow'r, 'tis there apply
We muſt, all good or evil to deſcry.
Duly inſpecting ſubſtance, we ſhall learn
Therein two modes, the chief to our concern,
Which, when evinc'd, will vindicate God's claim
To be Almighty: *that*, *dependent* name,
This, *independent*. *This* to God muſt fall
Alone; *that* to all ſubſtance elſe be all.
It muſt be thus, admit we preſuppoſe,
That all, but God, at God's volition roſe.
If ſole uncaus'd is God, He ſtands ſecure
Above, far far above, all other pow'r.
Since independent He, his modes believe,
Though ſimply extant, fix'd as poſitive:
They ever will be what they ever were:
His fate, his freedom, nothing can impair.
If other ſubſtances from Him all roſe,
Their fate, their freedom, all the modes each knows,
Muſt ſolely, totally on Him depend;
Be made and rul'd exactly to his end:

Nothing can interfere the leaſt to check
His iſſue wiſh'd ; but all muſt nick his beck.
And, that they roſe from Him, who dares deny?
No glimpſe appears, objection to ſupply.
They *might* ſo riſe ; and, if I rightly truſt,
The ſequel clearly will evince they *muſt*.
God, ſole uncaus'd, by independent fate
Free and almighty, freely does create
When, what he pleaſes, either bound or free,
Or bleſt, or curſt ; a world, a worm, or thee.
Exalt this truth, down ſinks the fiction vain
Of fate, that fixes cureleſs vice or pain.

Fate, fixing cureleſs evil, cannot be,
Unleſs there either is no deity ;
Or, though there is, yet nature's ſyſtem grows
As late premis'd, exempt in much from cauſe.
Thoughts moſt prepoſterous ! Nature's ev'ry mode
Aloud proclaims dependence and a God ;
Proclaims, God rais'd from nothing, matter, ſoul,
Adapted each, and ſyſtemiz'd the whole.

'Tis plain, for ſyſtem, aptitude muſt be
Among primordials, both in bound and free :
Primordials muſt be fit to form fit ties ;
From perfect parts a perfect whole muſt riſe :
Diſcordant pow'rs, or any modes not right,
While ſuch, no cauſe whatever could unite :
Fitneſs abſtract, no cauſe could ordering boaſt :
All, evermore, muſt be in chaos loſt.
And how can reaſon think, that God's controul,
Unleſs he made the parts, could frame the whole?
Before admitting that, we muſt admit,
Either primordials ſelf-exiſted fit ;

Or, he tranſmuted them to ſuit his view,*
Which would be equal to creating new.
Neither is plauſible. Our minds perſuade,
Primordials were by him from nothing made:
Thence were they fitted to compound this ſcene;
And never elſe a ſyſtem could have been.
Of origin we proofs ſo cogent ſee,
We may as wiſely queſtion that things be,
As that they ſprung from wiſdom. To ſuppoſe,
They could exiſt ſo fitly without cauſe,
Shocks common ſenſe: much rather might the parts
Of all the works of all the human arts
Be ſelf-exiſtent, all minutely fit:
Can ſoul believe unlikelihood ſo great?
Fitneſs in modes does God's creating ſhow
Convincingly, as if the act we ſaw.

See all around, the aptitude of mode
Declares a free, a wiſe, a mighty God:
Form, number, weight, and meaſure, ſtrongly vouch,
They were created by Creator ſuch.
Animal pow'rs atteſt, with force divine,
Their glorious origin, their God's deſign:
Fitted their proper objects to explore:
Fitted to moraliſe; yea, to adore:†
Fitneſs unfit, unleſs we thence ſuppoſe
An object fit, a Lord of moral laws:

out of nothing;

* By *tranſmuting*, in the caſe ſuppoſed, muſt be meant, either adding to their ſuppoſed ſelf-exiſtent natures ſomething new, which is truly creating; or ſubtracting ſomething from them, which is annihilating, and requires, I believe, a power no leſs than that required to create out of nothing.

† Job xii. 7, 8, 9. Minucius Felix, p. 130. Edit. Lugd. Bat. Cicero de Natura Deorum, Lib. II. p. 29, ad finem.

Moral

Moral religious fitneſs muſt imply
An object ſuch, its cauſe, its deity.
That ſuch relations are, let none diſpute;
Of things themſelves as wiſely may we doubt:
All theſe relations in one chorus join;
All ſtrive to magnify a pow'r divine;
All witneſs God, who gave them being, fit
To form a ſyſtem, and who formed *it*.

Subſtance uncaus'd in all might be our creed,
Would modes of ſubſtance pliantly accede;
For grant we muſt, what *is* might ſtill *have been*,
Did not its modes evince it did begin:
But mark the modes! Without a God's deſign
Could ſubſtances have fitneſs to combine?
Their aptitude evinces, that they roſe
From a moſt mighty, wiſe, free, moral cauſe.

And, as it ſhews they ſprung from ſuch alone,
It ſhews the great Original is One.
More ſelf-exiſtents, acting as one chief
Harmonious cauſe, is not for ſound belief:
Nor can the lights religious, ſuch as be,
To more than one deſpotic Lord agree;
Nor can our minds. No light diſcovers more;
Meet, if more were, that each we might adore:
Yet how adore? Full honour could we pay
To each, as firſt? or each alike obey?
Shar'd honour *muſt* be; part from each withdrawn:
Perhaps mis-ſhar'd. Then God is witneſs'd One!
Sole One, who all elſe made; and put between
That aptitude, which elſe could not have been.

But that no queſtion may ſolution want,
To witneſs God, the ſuppoſition grant,
(Though nothing more abſurd) that without God
Aptitude was in ſpirit's, matter's mode,
Proper for union; ſay, could any fate
Chance or deſign, without him, ſyſtemate? (11)
Without him, ſyſtemated things preſerve,
As not from laws conſtituent to ſwerve?
Fate, chance, deſign, could only be, at beſt,
Modes of the pow'rs, primordials poſſeſs'd.
Think ye, their pow'rs (howe'er ſo modify'd)
Could bend them in one plan to coincide?
Make each ſo wiſely its due ſtation claim,
To form, to keep, this various, wond'rous frame?
What! ſelf-eternal, (12) with ſuch modes, ſuch wit,
As to be fitted, and themſelves to fit;
Move, mix, and vary, as they ever fare,
Without a ſovereign providential care?
The pow'rs in nature all, that we deſcry,
Loudly give this hypotheſis the lie.
Who will, at pleaſure, may the thing conceive;
But common ſenſe will let no ſoul believe.

What! Aptitude uncaus'd, through this extent,
In matter's, ſpirit's, every element;
In all their fabrics, pow'rs and motions, found
Numerouſly various, as immenſe the round?
Inſpect their claſſes, all you can deſcry,
From mites, ſcarce ſeen by microſcopic eye,
To thoſe huge glowing orbs, through heav'n that roll:
Amazing aptitude equips the whole.
Believe ye without wiſdom extant *it*, (13)
Which ſpeaks, which beams, a wiſdom infinite?

What intellect, that ſees ſuch wonders ſhine,
Can muſe they *are* by ought but God's deſign?
Not mere exiſtence, we confeſs, but mode,
Preſents the radiant ſignatures of God.
Mode, wond'rous mode, in every aſpect ſhows,
There is a great creating ruling cauſe,
Whoſe wiſdom laws of fitneſs well does ſee;
Whoſe mighty will by them makes beings be;
And who, attent to them, thoſe beings ſways
For their perfection, and his ſovereign praiſe:
Myriads of modes reſiſtleſsly evince
God, his creation, and his providence;
Proclaim that wiſdom, might, and will divine,
Which needful are to make and to combine,
Needful to rule; and which, by fitteſt laws
Muſt deal for ever ſtations, joys, and woes.
This deeply meditate.
If God beſtow'd
Being on all, and ſettled ev'ry mode,
He can, if needful, change each nature's frame;
Or vary order, natures ſtill the ſame.
What chance, what force, hath riſen to prevent?
How hath he ceas'd to be omnipotent?
His own perfection full he ſtill muſt bear;
Becauſe exiſts no pow'r which can impair
[redacted] unchang'd by conſequential fate.
[redacted] all created [redacted] lies
[redacted] to him, who made its being riſe;
By him may be annihilated, chang'd;
Or its ſame parts may variouſly be rang'd,
Yet ſtill in perfect harmony combine;
As the ſame notes in various muſic join.

Natures,

Natures, relations, muſt be modell'd ſtill
Juſt at the beck of his almighty will.

We muſt infer, in wiſdom were it beſt,
Through all ſubordinate muſt all be bleſt;
Completely bleſt the reptile in the clay,
As the archangel ſhrin'd in brighteſt day;
Exempt from pain the foot ordain'd to tread,
And, to its feelings, happy as the head:
All would be fix'd in ſtations paſt annoy;
Or, in mutations, only change in joy.

Look nature through, vain worm! if not too blind;
Thou canſt, through all the vaſt expanſion find
No fate but that, which from God's nature ſprings,
And that, from natures he beſtows on things,
Efficient to eſtabliſh good or ill:
Then none to keep aught good impoſſible.
So great ſeems He, ſo ſubject all below
Through all this round, the proſpect bids us know
Evil's from no inſuperable fate;
But from his ſanction of a moral ſtate.

Think in what points the mind can fate ſuppoſe,
Inſuperable to the ſovereign cauſe.
Him limited we can conceive in nought,
Except in what's impoſſible to thought.
Whate'er is poſſible, we muſt allow,
For man to think, is ſo for God to do.
At leaſt, the contrary we cannot know:
And knowledge argues, it is likely ſo.

The few ideas, human minds poſſeſs,
Are only ſignatures, which things impreſs;

As

As ſoon can he, who finds his God in fault,
Create a world from nothing as a thought:
But God, whom he blaſpheme[illegible] could well prepare,
In his ideas, things before they were. (14)
And things themſelves more eaſily combines,
Than man ideas; and to all deſigns.
Audacious worm! can he in effort ſink,
Who more is free to act, than thou to think?

No neceſſary implication is,
That vice muſt be with virtue, woe with bliſs:
That they may not, ſee in their preſent range;
See in their kinds, degrees, and frequent change.
Can human mind the ſcenes before us eye
With thought, and this, this ſerious truth deny?
What could not He, who made things as they are,
Make them, in good or evil, different far?
He, who the preſent bliſs and woe hath given,
Not in extremeneſs build a hell or heav'n?
He, who made thee that free and ruling ſoul,
Can he want pow'r, at will, to ſtate the whole?
I quake to hear an animated clod
Arraign the dread omnipotence of God.

Since God the whole did to exiſtence call;
Once happy one, ſay why not always all?
He, who could one give bliſs, and woe not mix,
Could give the ſame to all; and, giv'n, could fix.
Imagine leſs we cannot: it is ſure,
Equal effects may flow from the ſame pow'r.
At pleaſure on the whole he could beſtow
A ſtate unmixt of either bliſs or woe.
With mereſt virtue he could all enſaint,
Secure from vice; or all with vice could taint.

Obſtructing God perfection to achieve,
Why argue fate, when none we can perceive;
And when perſuaded is by all we ſee,
And by ſtrict reaſon, *perfect good might be?*
The plain concluſion is, *The ill in things,*
Not from God's want, but from his fulneſs, ſprings:
No fate conſtrain'd him evil to admit;
*But his tranſcendency appointed it.**
Virtues and pleaſures freely he ordains,
With or without admitting vices pains.
Vices and pains he adds, with free deſign,
More to diſplay his deſpotiſm divine.

Behold, how impotent is boaſted fate! §
A lie, which Satan ſtamp'd on man in hate!
An impious pretext ſhrewdly to deny
God's holy ſway, and looſen duty's tye!
Ah! God's high glory no aggreſſions foil;
Guilt's blaſted engines on itſelf recoil.
The more you batter, but the more you break
Your own ſham'd pates, and prove your malice weak.
Abſurd as impious! God, creation's cauſe,
Muſt order abſolutely all its laws: †
Creation is what the Creator will;
Good univerſal muſt be poſſible.

No longer tedious reaſonings to obtrude,
And tire attention, thus the point conclude:

* Iſai. xlv. 5.—13. § Chryſoſtom in Acta Apoſt. Cap. xxii. Hom. 27.

† He can chooſe any end, and to that end any laws of fitneſs he pleaſes to form his works upon, and order and vary them by. He could no leſs make them unfit, if he pleaſed; but ſuch abſurdity is not to be ſuppoſed admiſſible with him. See the Appendix to this Book I.

The

The introducer to all evil's riſe
God's freeſt gift, without his fault, ſupplies:
'Tis *will*. Then neither blame created fate,
Nor uncreated for this evil ſtate.

III. " O ſhould not God this will have never made?
" Or not on it ſuch vaſt concernment laid?
" To fickle will ſhould God, all-wiſe, all-juſt,
" The precious weal of his creation truſt?
" Could He its direful bane with eaſe prevent,
" Yet let it propagate?"—
The pow'r he lent
To yield abundant good, though evil grew:
Righteous and gracious, glorious was his view.
Reflect; 'tis eaſy to be underſtood,
That evil muſt be poſſible for good;
Yet ought not to be real. Diſtant far, *
In this, the poſſible and real are:
The poſſibility much good implies;
But the reality much good denies.
God made the poſſible: the real roſe
Againſt his interdict; abuſe, the cauſe.

1. To clear this point, and diſſipate each dream,
Know, and mark well, what is *the end ſupreme*;
And what *the means* requir'd that end to gain:
You'll find, the means muſt evil's cauſe contain.
The glory of God is that moſt ſacred end, †
Which ſovereign wiſdom ſovereign muſt intend.

* Lactantius, Epiſt. C. 21.

† Rev. iv. 11. Exodus xxxiv. 14. Rom. iii. 23. Deut. xxviii. 58. Wiſd. Sol. xii. 15, &c. Jer. v. 22. Malachi ii. 2. Pro. xvi. 4.

To that, if beam'd in ſuch degree auguſt,
That all his attributes appear, there muſt,
Muſt ſomewhere be probation, whence may flow
Merit, demerit, claiming bliſs or woe.

What could the all-bleſt Deity deſign,
But to diſplay his attributes divine?
No end ſo good, ſo noble, ſhines confeſt;
He muſt prefer the nobleſt and the beſt.
Suppoſe he meant a perfect work to make,
Say, whence could he the great exemplar take?
The work moſt perfect muſt be what diſplays
His perfect attributes in brighteſt rays.
Suppoſe he meant much happineſs to give;
'Twas fit, creation in ſuch mode receive,
As with its own fair dignity well ſuits,*
And with the glory of his attributes:
'Twas fit to found it on a moral law,
Which implies will, guilt poſſible, and woe,
That join'd might be probation: valu'd leſs,
Than that high adjunct, muſt be happineſs;
Since by that more, than can by it, (much more)
Creation's dignity, God's glory, ſoar.
Know, to probation yields each ſervient end,
As that, and all, to the ſupreme muſt bend;
And, whate'er end the beſt to creatures ſeem,
His glory muſt to God outſhine ſupreme. (15)

Fitneſs is God's great law, he muſt attend,
In every choice he makes, of means or end,
Its rules depend not on his will or might,
Are ſelf reſult, unalterably right;*

* To many readers this will appear abſtruſe; though *fitneſs* be the foundation of all reaſoning; or all reaſoning is nothing elſe, but diſtin-

Sure

Sure ſacred truth.—Some from his ens which riſe,
Since that is fix'd, muſt always fix his choice.
Others, attach'd to creatures of his will,
Are, as thoſe objects are, commutable.

Our ſenſe of fitneſs teſtifies, 'tis fit
From his great ens (and nothing can demit.)
That he diſplay his wiſdom, freedom, might,
And, chiefly, hate of wrong and love of right,
Ev'n holineſs, of attributes the prime, (16)
The worthieſt of him, ſince moſt ſublime;
That attribute, regarding ſtrictly it,
Which perfect wiſdom ſees is perfect *fit*.
Diſplaying that, 'tis plain, he muſt diſplay
His other attributes the nobleſt way.

Since then God's glory fitly is the end,
Which, in creating, he will moſt intend;
Fit to that end his creatures will be made;
To that, their qualities, their ſtates array'd:
Chiefly probation will engage his care;
His higheſt attributes induce him there.
And retribution is no leſs imply'd:
When, where, and how, his pleaſure muſt decide.
Fit is, as this known plan announces fit:
(Not but plans different may be fit as it)
Fit is, that ſyſtems probative he rear,
For needful trial, in whoſe frame appear
No retributions, ſave to try, and blend
Preſage of full adjuſtment in the end;
And that, ſucceſſive, in due ſeaſon come
Syſtems retributive, for needful doom.

guiſhing what is fit from what is unfit: in other words, right from wrong. The nature of fitneſs is explained in the Appendix to this Firſt Book.

Fit

Fit is, that ſyſtems probative he found
On principles, the ſame, as ſeen all round;
And ſyſtems thence retributive unfold
On principles, the ſame as are foretold.

When, to his attributes, he will diſpenſe
A grand creation, a grand providence,
Not only various, curious, works muſt riſe,
Stupendous in their ſev'ral qualities,
By which his authorſhip may be expreſt
Divinely glorious; but, o'er all the reſt,
There muſt be ſpirits, with fit ſenſe, fit will,
For moral pow'r, for morals good and ill.
Fit objects, fit occaſions, muſt be laid,
That moral laws may be to be obey'd
Or diſobey'd; for conſcience to deſcry,
That honeſty and crime in morals lie;
That merit and demerit may be drawn,
To make diſpenſement of reward be ſhown.
How elſe could God diſplay, or creatures trace,
Wiſdom, pow'r, freedom, equity and grace? (17)
Theſe ſhine to man; perhaps adorers higher
More and ſublimer attributes admire.
Were not due freedom giv'n, not theſe could ſhine,
The great Creator could not beam divine.
Without expedients in his works prepar'd,
None of his attributes can be declar'd.
Pow'rs, objects, laws, occaſions, fit muſt riſe
For morals or ways free, and duty's ties.
Only with freedom due, and moral law,
Can creatures merit or demerit draw:
Of courſe, in conſequence of thoſe alone
Can God's ſublimeſt attributes be ſhown,

The attributes, emitting the intent,
Far the ſublimeſt, moral government.
Of courſe, through thoſe alone can be expreſs'd,
In full divineſt ſplendor, all the reſt.

Then God muſt freedom give; and ſuch, that ill,
*Moral and natural, muſt be poſſible,**
Guilt from his creatures, bound by moral law;
Pain from himſelf, the bane of guilt to ſhow.
Poſſible muſt be guilt, as thing forbid;
For elſe no duty-law could be decreed:

* It ought to be well obſerved, that between *poſſibility* of good and evil, depending on the creature's will, and *neceſſity* of them, not depending on the creature's will, is a wide and moſt important difference. The ſaid poſſibility *muſt* exiſt, for trial of the creatures and diſplay of God's attributes: the ſaid neceſſity muſt *not* exiſt, becauſe it would defeat thoſe purpoſes.

To *permit* evil is very different with reſpect to the attributes of God and the condition of the creatures, from *conſtraining* it to be. The permiſſion is neceſſary for many great purpoſes, is good, is ever juſt, ſince God hath given power, and commanded, to avoid evil, and will reward innocent ſufferers: but the conſtraining evil to be without regard to morals is neceſſary for no good purpoſe, that I can diſcover; and would be unjuſt and cruel. To give freedom and permiſſion is goodneſs in the giver; is making the creature of a nobler nature, than it could have poſſeſſed otherwiſe. If the creature, ſo gifted, abuſes freedom, the evil conſequences are juſtly imputable to none but itſelf.

And again: for the ſake of trial and the diſplay of God's attributes, ſome of the creatures muſt be made both free and fallible; otherwiſe there could be no moral probation; but it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that after having performed a due diſcipline, they will riſe to be infallible, though ſtill free, in a ſtate of retribution. This will be their reward of trial. They will ever be free, ſo as to have naturally the power to do evil as well as good; but by the rectitude of their diſpoſitions and their ſtate, they will have no inclination or temptation to evil. God himſelf has naturally power to do either good or evil, but not inclination to do moral evil, becauſe of his indefectible rectitude: ſo will it probably be with creatures made perfect in that perfection, which ſhall take place in a ſtate of retribution. But, I repeat, it is needful, in order to this, that they firſt paſs through a ſtate of trial, and merit from God ſuch a reward; otherwiſe his moral attributes could not be exerciſed.

Poſſible

Poſſible muſt be pain, as fit to ſpring,
If guilt offend creation's holy King.
That guilt be real is unfit; but fit,
If creatures will create, that God permit.
That pain be real is unfit, till guilt
Infringe the law, on which pure good is built.
Both muſt be real, if guilt real riſe;
For then muſt pain, to try and to chaſtiſe.
Ordain them poſſible God muſt; while yet
Neither is neceſſary, neither fit *
To enter real, ſave as here declar'd:
If creatures make the firſt, the laſt hath God prepar'd.
Thus, and thus only, evil (guilt and pain)
Or poſſible, or real, could obtain.
By God's free action, and no other cauſe,
Thus evil, poſſible and real, roſe.

All muſt be perfect if God's will was done;
But then, for trial, all muſt do their own,
Free to obſerve or violate his laws,
To carve or cancel either joys or woes:
Hence guilt and pain may enter, though forbid;
And, ſince they may, 'tis evident they did.
God muſt create each riſing ſyſtem bleſt,
Becauſe in bleſſing ſhines his glory beſt.
By the ſame reaſon muſt preclude all ill,
Far as conſiſts with right appointing will.
But ſince to moral will he muſt deſign
A moral rule, to be its law divine;
And ſince that will may fondly diſobey
That law divine, rebel againſt his ſway,
Sin may reſult; with virtue vice may blend,
And pain join pleaſure for creation's end.

All

* Eccluſ. xv. 20.

All poſſible probation, it is plain, (18)
All ſanction, muſt be pleaſure or be pain;
And in diſpenſing thoſe, as all obey,
God muſt his moral attributes diſplay.
Pleaſure muſt be ordain'd, at once to try
And to reward; and riſe with virtue high:
Pain too muſt be ordain'd, if vice be bred,
To try and puniſh; and with vice to ſpread.
In full perfection pleaſure tries alone,
While all combin'd obey the ſov'reign throne;
If imperfection intervenes, then pain
Muſt riſe, to warn all parties of the bane,
And try them more; that good and bad may learn,
How truth, all-ſacred truth, is God's concern.
Upon theſe principles things muſt depend,
To ſerve God's glory, nature's ſov'reign end;
Therefore, by nature's fundamental law,
Once all was happy; ſin occaſion'd woe.

Pain roſe at firſt God's holineſs to prove;
Enſign of wrath, erected yet in love:
Stedfaſt it ſtands, with kind ſevere intent,
Of wrath at ſin a dreadful monument.
God's hate of ſin it teſtifies ſevere;
It makes vice odious, virtue ſtill more dear;
It fitly warns the wicked to repent;
It fitly warns the righteous to prevent;
It calls on every creature to defend
Self and the public, and the ſov'reign end.

Thus pain becomes expedient, if ſin riſe,
To render creatures more maturely wiſe.
It ſcourges ſin, but not from ſin exempts;
It leaves us free; and, whilſt it ſcourges, tempts.

Conſiſtent with his plan, God muſt apply
Only ſuch means as, while they ſuccour, try;
Muſt aid the good, retard the bad's decay,
Sep'rate at laſt, and in new ſpheres repay.

In ſhort, infringing order, pleaſure fails;
Iniquity prevailing, pain prevails.
So pain ariſes from erroneous choice,
Effect of guilt, and God's judicial voice:
All natural evil, wretched beings know,
To moral evil wretched beings owe.

2. "*But virtue ſuffers, vice triumphant reigns.*"
Well! injur'd virtue by the trial gains;
Gains more experience, more divine regard,
More confirmation, more enhanc'd reward:
While vice indulges but a mean deſire
Of lawleſs joys, in anguiſh to expire.

'Tis plain, in ſyſtem, happineſs and woe
Muſt not to one, but all connected grow:*
Muſt grow from all to all, where all unite:
And this, for nature's ſov'reign end, is right.
Hence each, his int'reſt rightly underſtood,
Will ſeek his private in the public good;
And all will join ill morals to reſtrain,
Which threaten all with injury and pain:
Fitly will all be lur'd, by ſocial ſway,
Freely to ſerve the whole, and God obey.
Trial more full will good and bad endure;
The good improve, the bad have chance for cure.

* See 1 Cor. xii. 26.

Juſtice

Juſtice and grace to both require this plan;
Then ceaſe objection, ceaſe thy murmurs, man! *

* Agreeably to this intention, (which is fundamental in this probative ſyſtem) the angels are not permitted to gather the tares immediately, Matt. xiii. 29. and men are commanded to love and forgive the wicked, though their enemies, after the example of God, who in this ſtate, as is expedient for the purpoſe of it, ſhews kindneſs to the juſt and the unjuſt; and diſtributes to both much alike. Matt. v. 45. This procedure of God is needful for the common trial of men; and the example of God, in this point, illuſtrates a very important duty of men, viz. the promoting of trial, and general love and happineſs, by kindneſs and forgiveneſs to the wicked. Kindneſs and forgiveneſs to the wicked are duties of men, evidently requiſite in this ſtate, for the ſaid purpoſe of trial, and to promote general love and happineſs; and the more eſpecially, as mankind in general need forgiveneſs from God; and have received from him a ſolemn offer of forgiveneſs, made with this among other conditions, that they ſhall be forgiven as they forgive. The promiſcuous diſtribution of good and evil, under the providence of God, is proper for the ſtate we are in; and is no argument, that God overlooks the difference of good and bad morals; but that, in his goodneſs, he defers his awarding according to that difference, till arrive[illegible] the ſtate of retribution, which is the proper ſeaſon for ſuch award. He defers, in order that the wicked may have time for repentance, as well as the good have time to give proof of obedience. Undoubtedly, both with God and man, forgiveneſs has limits, beyond which to forgive would tend to evil, rather than to good. And alſo entire forgiveneſs, on the part of the offended, ſeems to require complete repentance and reformation, on the part of the offender. Luke xiii. 3. and xvii. 3.

It is evidently fit, in the plan of a moral creation, that God ſhould appoint in it what [illegible]y be called *two births*, a natural and a moral. The firſt muſt be according to God's unconditional will; the ſecond, according to his will conditional, i. e. the ſecond muſt be partly depending on each creature's own choice and conduct. By the firſt, every moral creature is uſhered into exiſtence in a ſtate of probation, which ſtate is to be conſidered as the womb-ſtate, preparative to the moral birth, which ſecond birth uſhers each moral creature into a ſtate of retribution. The iſſue of this laſt birth is good or evil, according to the reſpective morals, which each creature performed in the moral womb-ſtate, or ſtate of probation. The laſt muſt be reckoned the full birth of a moral creature; and is deciſive of its future happineſs or miſery. Luke xx. 36. In order to the latter birth, as well as to the firſt, there muſt be a proper time of geſtation, with a proper kind of proceſs. We cannot conceive, that God could bring moral creatures to their full birth, in any manner more proper than that, which appears to be appointed.

To good or bad let pain at firſt befall,
It works its end; it tries and chaſtens all:
Evil and good it makes diſtinct appear,
That all may evil hate, and good revere.
Be it on injurer or injur'd thrown,
The baleful tendency of ſin is ſhown,
That injurer and injur'd may preſume
How vaſt is ſin's demerit, dire its doom;
That both, ſufficiently forwarn'd, may ſhun
Its fatal ways, which to deſtruction run.
On whomſoe'er the load at firſt be caſt,
The good muſt riſe, the bad muſt ſink at laſt.
Nor let the injur'd deem his lot too hard,
Which, well ſuſtain'd, will bring him vaſt reward.
'Tis fit that they, who high reward attain,
Should not by fate, but by their merits gain;
Suffering for right, if others will by wrong
Suffering induce; and ſo, by virtue ſtrong,
Conſpire with God, perfection to reſtore,
And fix perfection ſafe, to lapſe no more.

O ſacred truth! probation here implies
A retribution muſt hereafter riſe.
And hence, as morals ceſſate or excel,
Ev'n ſimple reaſon bodes a heav'n or hell:
But revelation, which alone can prove,
Declares theſe ſtates expreſsly from above.
In them ſhall retribution all redreſs,
And make the ſov'reign glory ſhine expreſs.

Virtue muſt ſuffer, vice triumphant reign,
Elſe due probation neither could ſuſtain;
Then nature's end, God's glory, could not ſhine
In retribution ſo expreſs, divine.

Therefore

Therefore, what ſeems in trial moſt unjuſt,
Ought to be poſſible; permit God muſt.

No wrong in him! From ſyſtem made thus free,
Future *reward* muſt for adjuſtment be.
That, and that only, with ſuch ſyſtem ſuits,
Fully to vindicate his attributes.
And that ſuffices well. While he permits
Wrongs in his creatures, Him reward acquits.
All his permiſſions and inflictions hard
Are fully juſtified by *reward*.

Juſtice and grace God ever muſt diſpoſe
In manner ſuited to a ſyſtem's laws.
Thoſe laws, ſince his ſelection, muſt be quite
Pure in the property of moral right.
Selection, when he made, therein he meant
Juſtice and grace ſhould rule to full extent.
Suiting the laws, preſcrib'd each ſyſtem's range,
He muſt, as creatures merit, fix or change;
Give proceſs, theſe by thoſe to ſave or ſlay,
As their relations in [illegible] may;
Here by a Satan multitudes deſtroy;
There by a Chriſt redintegrate to joy;
And laſtly, one by one, their portions deal
To all; and ſet on each his judgment's ſeal.
Howe'er perplex'd his providence appear
To us in trial, under darkneſs here,
Doubtleſs at laſt his luſtre will outſhine, *
Blaz'd in reward, triumphantly divine.

3. " Methinks it ſtill obnoxious to debate,
" Which to prefer, or liberty or fate.

* Ezek. xiv. 23.

" In

" In happineſs God's glory would have ſhone:
" Why are we free, alas! to be undone?"

This plea, if for God's glory you intend,
Muſt fail; for fate, at beſt, ill ſerves that end,
If 'tis unmix'd with liberty: unmix'd,
It far defaults, howe'er in pleaſure fix'd.
In happineſs God's glory cannot ſhine,
But as it ſhews his attributes divine:
His moral attributes it cannot ſhew,
But in ſubſervience to a moral law:
Then for his glory moſt, he muſt decree,
That it depend upon obedience free.
I grant, in happineſs, beſtow'd aright,
His glory ſhines the moſt divinely bright,—
Beſtow'd on merit. There his glory's boaſt
Is moſt diſplay'd, and moſt where merit moſt.

Witneſs redemption: there we chiefly trace
All his known attributes: that act of grace
Addreſs'd to creatures, moral-free as meet,
Chiefly diſplays him in all greatneſs great.
His word the holieſt documents conveys;
Prophecies warn, and miracles amaze:
Pardon is largely reap'd by all, who will;
And by the juſt, reward ineffable:
While they alone, who ſtubbornly rebel,
Muſt, ſince they will, deſcend unbleſt to hell.
Thus mercy, juſtice, wiſdom, freedom, might
Beam with peculiar, ſuperardent light.
Thus ſhines his glory with decorous ſtate,
Rais'd to an height impoſſible in fate.

If for the creatures you adduce the plea,
Fate muſt be caſt, right reaſon muſt decree.

We grant, were happineſs the grand intent,
Mere fate were beſt; no freedom ſhould be lent;
Mere ſenſe might then the ends of ſoul fulfil,
Without imagination, mem'ry, will:
Happineſs needs but ſenſe in happy ſtrain;
Sublimer pow'rs would be beſtow'd in vain.
But if ſublimer pow'rs, free actions' birth,
Knowledge from ſearch, and happineſs from worth,
With all the excellence by will expreſt,
Be ends ſuperior, liberty is beſt.
Happineſs, fate-eſtabliſh'd, might have ſtood,
Perhaps, eternal as the throne of God;
But then muſt nature have leſs nobly ſhone:
Grand pow'rs conſiſt with liberty alone.
Liberty, like to nobleſt ends conduce;
The nobleſt pow'rs in nature thence have uſe:
It graces nature as it honours God;
And is a private and a public good.
Not only nobleſt pow'rs we thence poſſeſs,
But, are we virtuous, nobleſt happineſs,
Conſcience of moral worth, of worth approv'd
By God ſupreme, rewarded and belov'd.
What happineſs like this! And could this be
Without probation and obedience free?
Know, man, thy greateſt pow'r of being bleſt
Lies in thy ſubjectneſs to be diſtreſt.
What cordial joy, what triumph, ſhalt thou find
From evil nobly conquer'd, and left far behind!
'Tis like the joy of God, we may ſuppoſe,
When midſt the void his fair creation roſe:
Or like his joy for fallen works reſtor'd
To ſhare his bliſs, and gratulate their Lord.
Who would renounce his godlike pow'rs, to dwell
Beneath an oyſter, fate-bound in a ſhell,

Merely for happineſs, which, ſoon or late,
Free virtue gains in a celeſtial ſtate?
Let wicked varlets, hating to reform,
Wiſh themſelves meaner than the meaneſt worm!
Them it becomes low objects to admire;
But let not all the deities expire,
The myriads free, whom godlike pow'rs inveſt,
Who all, by virtue, may be heav'nly bleſt.

Object no more to God's appointing will
Among his works, with ſway to good and ill;
So muſt for his high glory be prepar'd,
And for their dignity, deſert, reward.
No truth more clear! A ſyſtem all in fate,
Could not of good preſent a ſum ſo great.
To creature and Creator good extends
Immenſely moſt, when it on will depends.
Though vicious will withdraws from God ſome praiſe, (19)
From ſouls ſome pleaſure, this like nothing weighs,
Compar'd with all thoſe faculties divine,
Which in free ſyſtems only e'er could ſhine;
Compar'd with God's high glory, end of all,
Which ſcarce could riſe if nature could not fall.
Shall God want glory, dignity the juſt,
Becauſe the wicked will abuſe their truſt?
No, fit forbids! Prepoſt'rous that indeed!
More wiſely far the Maſter hath decreed.
The wicked's guilt occurs to good event;
Exalts the juſt; themſelves if they repent;
And, in thoſe attributes we moſt revere,
Makes God himſelf more glorioufly appear.

Confeſs my triumph! Liberty is fit,
Evil on due conditions to admit.

Plan

Plan probative muſt be; and muſt, as beſt,
Admit to turn both ſinful and diſtreſt.
If ſin comes, pain comes by probation's law:
By retribution's will come endleſs woe;
Unleſs by righteouſneſs you ſtrive to riſe
To retribution, which all pain denies.
In that high ſtate alone, where love divine,
Blaz'd in reward, ſhall energetic ſhine,
Evil muſt be admitleſs; good, ſecure
From its invaſions, reign forever pure.
Alone in that is gain'd, by worth in this,
Infallibility of virtue, bliſs.
Confeſs my triumph!

IV. But, if reaſon fail,
Lo! nature vouches: nature muſt prevail!
Nature confirms, as far as nature can,
The leading truths of revelation's plan.
In what belongs to nature's preſent frame,
Nature and revelation teach the ſame.
If what is fit, from nature you will learn,
And what is the Creator's chief concern,
Freedom it vouches fit, you muſt confeſs;
Probation more his aim, than happineſs.

1. For ſee, in nature, freedom giv'n; ſee will
Whence vice as virtue is made poſſible,
Whence pain as pleaſure liable to be:
And marr'd is happineſs with miſery.
See will predominates, as chief and beſt
Of natures powers; gives uſe to all the reſt:
Yea, will gives uſe to ev'n the whole creation;
For, lo! the whole exiſts to ſerve probation.

2. All ambient nature with this end compare;
You'll find, *that nat'rals all for morals are.*
For this alone God's works in ſyſtem roſe:
Since but in ſyſtem theſe could act on thoſe:
Union alone all means to act ſupplies:
Then for probation needs muſt ſyſtem riſe;
And for probation only: God might bleſs,
Were union not, all life with happineſs.
Abſtract probation, wherefore were combin'd
Mechanic matter, and free-agent mind? (20)
Abſtract probation, mind ſhould not be free;
Matter were vain; no mechaniſm needs be.*
Then, clear as noon, probation is the aim!
That, which alone aſks matter and this frame,
That, which alone admits free ſouls divine,
Muſt be the centre of God's whole deſign.

Behold a ſyſtem in full order rear'd;
See underſtanding, join'd with will, conferr'd.
The uſe of order is for moral law;
The uſe of underſtanding is to know;
The uſe of law, of knowledge, and of will, †
Muſt be intelligent free agence ſtill;

* *Matter were vain,* ſuppoſing, as is commonly ſuppoſed, that ſpirit be *immaterial.*

† Probation ſeems to be ſo inſeparable from will, does ſo neceſſarily conſtitute the uſe of it, that I cannot ſee, how a free-agent creature, in any ſtate, can be exempt from probation of ſome kind or other: even in a ſtate of retribution there muſt be ſome trial, or (what amounts to the ſame) ſome uſe of will. Probably, in ſuch ſtate, the good ſhall be ſo guarded by divine mercy, that no failures, they are capable of, ſhall forfeit their reward: while yet ſome attentions ſhall be required of them to exalt their happineſs. A ſtate of probation and a ſtate of retribution may well be thought to have this in common, that right conduct ſhall produce advantage, and wrong conduct diſadvantage, ſuitable to the different ſtates. We can perceive no end, for which will is ſtrictly neceſſary, ſave trial; nor any, for which trial is ſtrictly neceſſary, but to diſplay God's moral attri-

And

And that be for probation, as require
A ſyſtem's laws, to ſerve the ſovereign Sire.
See pow'rs to act, and needs to be ſupply'd.
There muſt be needs, that pow'rs may be employ'd.
Hence pow'rs and needs a due proportion bear.
But why ſuch pow'rs, to make ſuch needs their care?
God could give happineſs without ſuch pow'rs,
Without ſuch needs; nor aſk one act of ours:
Without, could wiſdom, might and goodneſs ſhow,
So far as, without freedom, fate can go.
Why gave he pow'rs and needs for free employ;
And on free conduct founded grief and joy?
Why bade he habits by our acts arrange;
And, but by efforts, by degrees, to change?
Why made he each on other to depend
For balm or bane, as acting foe or friend?
Why plant a ſenſe of duty in the mind,
With paſſions, open to ſeduction, join'd?
Why all this apparatus? Tell me why?
The plain peculiar purpoſe is—*to try.*

3. Behold how conſtant all mechanic laws!
Yet God does freely, as he made, diſpoſe. (21)
The reaſon then explore, the end declare,
Why nature's laws are conſtant as they are.
'Tis plain, if nature's laws were varying ſtill,
We could not reaſon or to good or ill;

butes. In order to the laſt great end, ſome kind of trial may be neceſſary in every ſtate. As it is congruous to a probative ſtate to be partly retributive; ſo it may be congruous to a retributive ſtate to be partly probative. We know, that the end of the firſt ſtate makes it fit, that it ſhould be partly retributive; the end of the laſt ſtate may alſo make it fit, that it be partly probative.

'Tis on their permanency we depend,
To reaſon, or to act, to any end.
If fire, for inſtance, ſeldom were the ſame,
Often inactive, as a painted flame,
A pagan zealot might as well uſe paint
To roaſt a ſacrifice, or burn a ſaint.
[redacted] its ſolid [redacted] forego,
Water its fluid, by no ſtated law,
What uſe in either? Nothing could avail
Labour or forecaſt: who would plough or ſail?
If the phyſician's balm, the murderer's bane,
Wrought ſtill precariouſly, now ſtrong, now vain,
Why ſtir to ſave or ſlay? So unforeknown
Cauſe and effect, probation could be none:
Only on ſtated laws can God enjoin
Probation's taſk, and prompt his chief deſign:
Probation then the reaſon we declare,
Why nature's laws are conſtant as they are.

4. Behold, again, how happineſs [redacted] flow
From virtuous conduct, and from vicious woe!
Condition [redacted] could [redacted] in nature's frame
[redacted] place, without probation for its aim.
Abſtract this reaſon, none remaineth why
Good or ill any ſhould in morals lie.
Wherefore ſhould good and ill in them accrue,
Unleſs God mean to try, which we'll purſue?
This reaſon anſwers, and no other ſuits,
Why differ morals ſo in kinds and fruits.

Well our experience may aſſure the faith
Of revelation—*Sin induced death*;
Sin drew the curſe of God, which ſapp'd the health
Of ſoul and body; blighted peace and wealth;

And

And, by degrees, from holineſs and bliſs
Reduc'd this world to be the wretch it is.
Confirming this, we ſee the good and ill,
By this means blent, depend on morals ſtill.

Reaſon muſt with experience join the plea,
That thus it was; for thus it ought to be,
For as, to yield probation, it is plain,
A conſtant order generally muſt reign;
So, for the ſame, from moral change muſt breed
A change in nature, ſuch as God decreed.
God, ſince moſt free, moſt wiſe and good, muſt ſtill
Perſiſt in rectitude immutable:
He therefore muſt to morals ſtill diſpoſe
The ſyſtem's range, by wiſe and righteous laws:
And moral creatures too muſt work ſome change
To good or evil, in the ſyſtem's range:
Therefore, from change in morals, muſt enſue
A correſponding change in nat'rals too:
It muſt, from agence of the creatures flow;
It muſt, from God's exertion of his law;
That good and evil may diſtinct appear;
That all may evil hate, and good revere.
What ought to be, that is: through ſin firſt came
The curſe of God which tainted nature's frame:
And ſtill ſo ſet are nature's ſecret ſprings,
That vice brings pain, and virtue pleaſure brings:
Virtue does order, order eaſe ſuſtain;
Vice brings diſorder, and diſorder pain,
Virtue could only happineſs impart,
If vice were not, to miſery to pervert.
Virtue ne'er harms, but in redreſſing ill;
Vice never charms, but in event to kill.

Vice cauſes all the woe that flows from man;
And virtue all the bliſs that mortal can.
Therefore, in nature, ſceptics muſt confeſs,
Without obedience is no happineſs.
The reaſon's clear: probation's more the view:
God, who the end appointed, will purſue:
Purſuing it, will happineſs withdraw,
Where ſinful creatures violate his law;
And, finally, will happineſs confer
On thoſe who err not, or who ceaſe to err,
From his high glory. He can but intend
That *ſovereign good* to crown *the ſovereign end.* (22)

Can nature's voice more potently proclaim
Abuſe of will the cauſe whence evil came?*
For what ſhould ſeem the priſtine cauſe of ill,
But what at preſent tends to cauſe it ſtill?
Can nature's voice with ſtronger accent ſend,
Probation's more than happineſs, the end? (23)
Were happineſs ſuperior, reaſoner! why
Does it depend on what can it deſtroy?
On moral conduct, or on any law,
That leaves a poſſible acceſs to woe?

* That the origin of evil is the creature's tranſgreſſions and God's conſequent inflictions, is ſo atteſted by our beſt notions of God, the nature of his works and revelation, that it is indubitable. We ſee and feel daily, that tranſgreſſions produce evil; we learn from the hiſtory and prophecies of the Bible, (a book on purpoſe to teach us the ways of God with men) that God's inflictions on tranſgreſſions produce various, wonderful, and aſtoniſhing evils. Many and frequent are the effects intended to convince us of this truth, in order that by good morals we may avoid producing evil, and not incur the inflictions of it. The evidence is ſufficient to convince us; greater evidence, probably is not fit to be given.

We are placed in ſuch trial, that we may learn the value of obedience. Reaſon tells us, that thoſe only are worthy of good, who ſhew themſelves willing properly to promote it. Heb. v. 8.

Were happineſs ſuperior, that deſtroy'd
Would render God's moſt ſacred purpoſe void:
Were that ſuperior, it ſhould ſtand ſecure
Above the ſhock of all created pow'r:
Were that ſuperior, it in all would reign;
For but through trial e'er exiſted pain,
Trial inducing ſin: for, barring ſin,
None could be puniſh'd, none have injur'd been:
All would be happy, if were all upright:
So would ordain the all-creative might:
The uncontroul'd, all-wiſe, all righteous will
Would, but through ſin, let pain be poſſible.
See happineſs on morals made depend;
Becauſe probation is the nobler end.

5. Laſtly: 'tis plain, (probation God's grand view)
Both good and bad awhile muſt wait their due:
Vice muſt not inſtantly to hell be driven;
Nor virtue inſtantly advanc'd to heav'n:
Connected they muſt live, each other try,
Enhancing merit or demerit high:
So trial will be full; ſo God will ſhine,
In retribution, glorioufly divine.

Lo, every plant by ſtages grows from ſeed
To blade, to flow'r, to fruit, as God decreed:
Without ſuch proceſs God could not declare
The various wonders of his ſkill and care.
Moral plantations, thoſe, which needs were made,
That moral attributes might be diſplay'd,
Muſt needs through trial [redacted] attain'd
Their laſt perfection, for reward ordain'd:
Fail they in trial, ev'n to loſt decay,
They muſt not, till due time, be caſt away.

Thus

Thus, and thus only, (nothing is more clear)
Can God in all his attributes appear.

As fit, behold! Probation to create
Virtue ſuccumbs, while vice exults in ſtate; (24)
Virtue and vice in ſtrong contention blend;
And for ſuch ſeaſon as matures the end.

6. Thus nat'ral evil comes, 'tis underſtood,
* From moral evil, but for moral good;

* In compliance with cuſtom, I have uſed the words *natural* and *moral*, as contradiſtinctives: yet think them to be very improperly ſuch. We ſay *natural* and *moral* good and evil, as if moral good and evil were unnatural; whereas they are as natural, as are thoſe kinds of good and evil, which we call natural. By natural good and evil is meant good and evil in nature's conſtitution or frame, founded in the property of *fate* or *neceſſity* in nature: by moral good and evil is meant good and evil free actions, founded in the property of *freedom* in nature; more proper terms of diſtinction would be *conſtitutional* and *moral*; or perhaps rather *neceſſitarious* and *moral*. We ſay *natural* and *moral* fitneſſes or laws; it would be a better diſtinction to call them *neceſſitarious* and *moral*: for moral fitneſſes are as natural as the fitneſſes, which we diſtinguiſh from them by the word *natural*. By moral fitneſſes is commonly meant fitneſſes, implying duty, with honeſty or crime in the agent: now only a few fitneſſes, in compariſon of the whole, are of that ſort; whereas all fitneſſes are in ſome ſenſe *moral*; i. e. are directive of the actions of free agents, either the actions of God or his creatures. I think the right diſtinction between fitneſſes implying duty, and fitneſſes which do not, would be to call the laſt *ſimple* fitneſſes, and the firſt *dutious* fitneſſes. Another perſon may find better terms. Duties are uſually divided into *natural* and *poſitive*, meaning by the firſt, duties, which riſe immediately from the nature of things; and by the laſt, duties ſuperinduced by after-inſtitution. This diſtinction is not much amiſs; yet inſtead of *natural* I would prefer *native*; becauſe poſitive duties are in a degree *natural*, but are not *native*; they ſpring not ſpontaneouſly.

We ſay *natural* and *revealed* religion, as if revealed religion was unnatural, beyond or contrary to nature; which is a very falſe idea, and of bad conſequence. This uſe of words commonly miſleads ideas, and deceives; and in ſome caſes (as in this) is ſeriouſly injurious to truth. By *natural religion* we mean ſuch religion, as man

To

To mend the bad, to elevate the beſt;
And, chiefly, God's high glory to atteſt.

may be ſuppoſed to acquire by his own inſpection or contemplation of the few ſcenes of nature before him; a preſentaneous, ſpontaneous, or ſelf-acquired religion: for this reaſon I would call it *indigenous* religion; and the religion of *indigeniture*, inſtead of the religion of *nature*. By *revealed* religion we mean religion taught by communication with ſuperior beings; and it is rightly called *revealed*; but it is as natural as the religion ſuppoſed to be acquired without ſuperior revelation; it is equally founded in nature; and muſt be more agreeable to nature, than any religion which man of himſelf could excogitate. It ſets before us nature in its ſtates paſt, ſecret, and future, as far as is needful for us to know.

As I am on the ſubject of diſtinctive words, I ſhall obſerve, that Mr. *Locke's* terms in his diviſion of Science are not quite to my mind, φυσικη, πραακτικη, σημειοσικη: becauſe πραακτικη and σημειοτικη are in great part φυσικη, I would inſtead of φυσικη, adopt ſome term, more properly diſtinctive.

A diſtinction often uſed is *the law of nature* and *the law of grace*; and alſo *the kingdom of nature* and *the kingdom of grace*. More properly might be ſaid *the law of perfectneſs* and *the law of grace*; or better ſtill it might be to uſe St. Paul's diſtinction, *the law of works* and *the law of faith*: or we may call the firſt the diſpenſation of works, or the covenant of works; and the laſt, the diſpenſation of grace, or the covenant of grace, or the covenant of promiſe. Where the original language of ſcripture affords terms of diſtinction, they will always be found more juſt, than any adopted in their ſtead. *The law of works* is the law given to man in a ſtate of innocence, by ſtrict adherence to which in faith and practice by ſuch law required, he would have preſerved immortality and happineſs. The law of Moſes has a reference to this law, proper to its deſign; and likewiſe to the law of faith, or diſpenſation of grace. *The law of faith* is the law given to man in a fallen ſtate; is the covenant of promiſe to redeem mankind by Jeſus Chriſt. This law ſuppoſes mankind unable to fulfil the law of works; and therefore offers them forgiveneſs and relief, on condition of their repenting and fulfilling the law of works as far as they can: and their having faith in the promiſe of God to forgive them, through the ſacrifice of Chriſt, which is their propitiation making up for their deficiencies in obedience. Hence it is called the *law of faith*, in oppoſition to the law of works; becauſe faith in Chriſt's merits makes up for deficience in works, and without perfect works ſaves them. In other words, Chriſt's propitiation, Rom. iii. 25. 1 John, ii. 2. Acts xiii. 34. is, by the will of God, appointed and accepted, to forgive them their ſins, and excuſe them from the puniſhment of the ſecond death, Rev. ii. 11. and xx. 6. on condition of

Thus ſcripture, reaſon, nature, all profeſs
The ſovereign purpoſe is not happineſs.
Thus ſcripture, reaſon, nature, all proclaim,
Probation for God's glory is the aim.
Occaſion great! for hard it were to ſay
Why aught was made, excepting to diſplay
His glorious attributes; in all points beam
The wonders of his majeſty ſupreme.
See then *probation for God's glory* ſhine
The *ſov'reign end* of all th' auguſt deſign.
Each point ſurvey with all your captious wit;
Exactly all to this great end is fit!
See *natures*, *laws*, *mutations*, all agree
For *trying virtue*, *for obedience free!*
See *virtue's end*, devoutly *to fulfil*,
In ſacred order, *God's imperial will!*

their living well under trial, according to their ſtate; and particularly on condition, that they, to whom it is revealed, receive it by faith, and ratify it by repentance and a newneſs of life. By this *will of God they are ſanctified.* Heb. x. 10. Although *the law of faith* remits offences againſt *the law of works* (or ſaves *without the deeds of the law*, Rom. iii. 28. a phraſe, by which the Apoſtle, St. Paul, means, without *the full performance* of the law) yet the great purpoſe of the law of faith is, to excite obedience to the law of works. It affords much ſtronger motives to obedience in works than could be had without a revelation of grace: it ſhews us God's care of our morals, and his ſacred requiſition of righteouſneſs; and at the ſame time, gives the higheſt encouragement of aſſiſtance and acceptance, if we endeavour as we ought to fulfil the law of works ſincerely, though imperfectly. Faith in Chriſt has certainly of itſelf great merit, as a rational, devout, and grateful attention to the promiſe of God, properly atteſted, and ſolemnly calling us to belief and confidence; but to render it effectual, it muſt produce ſuitable effects in heart and life, in performing the farther conditions of us required, i. e. our beſt endeavoured obedience to the law of works. The goſpel, or law of grace, is moſt rationally adapted to man in his preſent condition; to aſſiſt him to obtain happineſs through rational belief, pious confidence, and well-endeavoured obedience, ſuitable to his nature and ſtate; and is all that God hath provided to that end. *It is the power of God unto ſalvation.*

So

So to his glory all is made to bend;
The *ſov'reign Author* is the *ſov'reign end!*

Behold his *glory* ſtands the *final view!*
The univerſe to glorify him grew.
Whate'er emerges from created pow'r,
Evil or good, it glorifies him more.
Wiſdom, pow'r, freedom, in each work we trace;
More they expand with equity and grace:
In holineſs ſublime mature they meet:
His glory there ſhines aggrandiz'd complete.
Thus all his attributes, divinely bright,
Fully diſplay'd, *Whatever is, is right!*

V. Know then, creation muſt, by good decree,
Be as it is—with morals muſt agree;
And ſtill, as vice and virtue ebb and flow,
Reſponſively muſt happineſs and woe.

The ſtate depends on all the ranks, above,
Below, combin'd, that will, and hate or love—
Angelic, human, brute.—As pow'rs inveſt,
Each acts its part, to help or hurt the reſt.
God's diſpenſations, howſoe'er let fall,
General or ſpecial, ſtill comport with all.

Such gen'ral temper reigns in every ſphere,
As correſponds with general morals there.
Fitly, as ſpecial inſtances demand,
God interpoſes, with a ſpecial hand,

'Tis not for us, poor reptiles, to declare
The height, the depth, the round, of ſov'reign care;

Nor count the acts, nor ſay how ſwiftly wrought,
Outnumb'ring atoms, and outſtripping thought.
Suffice that He, who occupies the throne
Of boundleſs empire, over worlds unknown,
Rule, in his might, his ample realms through ſpace,
With perfect wiſdom, equity, and grace:
Suffice that here dominion he maintain
By general laws, with ſlacken'd moral reign;
And only partly puniſh or reward,
As ſpecial caſes call for ſuch regard:
Not cruſhing vice; not judging ſtrictly here;
But applicably to probation's ſphere.
Strict judgment in ſpheres probative were wrong;
To ſpheres retributive muſt that belong.
Here one or few he may defer or ſpare;
Many may challenge his immediate care.
Hence ſo he orders, vice too often brings
To perſons affluence of external things;
To ſtates but ſeldom; oft'ner preſent bane:
For only virtue can a ſtate ſuſtain.
Hence, ſo he orders, perſons often find
For virtue harm; loſe all but worth of mind;
But ſtates, poſſeſs'd of virtue, moſtly grow
In ſpite of all oppugnancy below.
States muſt in this life paſs through all their doom;
But perſons theirs muſt 'bide in life to come.
Suffice that, openly, he ſo diſpenſe
His ſpecial acts, as beſt to wake due ſenſe;
Correcting vice, now curſe a fertile ſoil;
Now, bleſſing virtue, make a deſert ſmile;
Now take away, or now confer a crown;
Now raiſe a kingdom, or now pull one down.
Suffice that, ſecretly, he ſo controul,
As morals claim, the temper of each ſoul;

Exalt from ſtrength to ſtrength, from light to light,
By gradual aid, the ſtudious of the right;
Alike depreſs the daring to rebel
From depth to depth, from curſe and death to hell.

All this for trial muſt be underſtood!
All, to diſplay the attributes of God!

Deſpotic he, fate-thron'd, he rules our fate;
Virtue his love, and vice no leſs his hate:
He rules for that, for which he built the frame,
Probation every diſpenſation's aim!
To that deſign, what deep, what various ſkill!
How all his ways conſpire for trying will! *
O'er will he watches with moſt ſpecial care
(Elſe vain his providence, and vain our pray'r:)
His care of will makes all creation bend
To his high *glory*; ſacred, ſov'reign end!

* See Epheſians i. 5, 10. Coloſ. i. 9, &c. where St. Paul, as in ſeveral other places, inſiſts on the wiſdom of God, diſplayed in the goſpel. Though, with the misjudging infidel, the goſpel may ſeem *fooliſhneſs*, 1 Cor. 1, 22, &c. yet, with the candid and attentive reaſoner, it has the marks of profound wiſdom. It is a moſt wiſe ſcheme of God, *to the glory of his grace*, his moſt illuſtrious attribute; and *to the ſalvation of men*, by the moſt rational proceſs; adminiſtering alſo to ſeveral grand purpoſes beſides, reſpecting other beings. The wiſdom of it conſiſts in the aptitude of its contrivance, reſpecting God and the ſyſtem in general: but particularly reſpecting God and men, it is adapted to glorify God with men in a ſolemn offer of his grace; and to bring men to their acceptance thereof in a way the fitteſt for ſuch creatures;—namely, by an honeſt uſe of their faculties and affections, by their rational faith and their duteous obedience thereupon. If God had not offered them grace by this or ſome revelation, in ſuch way as to require the honeſt application of their reaſon and the honeſt guidance of their affections, in order to obtain the benefit of it, his wiſdom in the main point, (that of diſplaying his own moral attributes, and of uniting his creatures to himſelf by their moral obedience) muſt have remained, reſpecting men, deficient in its exertions.

Thus

Thus ſhines the Syſtem excellent in all!
Sublimely beams its grand original!
Convinc'd! all vain hypotheſes reſign:
Candidly own this real plan divine!

END OF BOOK I.

NOTES

NOTES

ON

BOOK I,

OF

THE SYSTEM,

A POEM:

REFERRED TO BY CORRESPONDING NUMBERS.

(1) HOMINEM noſſe ſe, et circumſpicere debere, quid ſit, unde ſit, quare ſit; utrum elementis concretus, an concinnatus atomis, an potius a Deo factus, formatus, animatus? Quod ipſum explorare et eruere ſine univerſitatis inquiſitione non poſſumus, cum ita cohærentia, connexa, concatenata ſint, ut, niſi divinitatis rationem diligenter excuſeris, neſcias humanitatis. *Minucius Felix, p.* 125. *edit. Lugduni Batavorum.*

(2) Ξαφως γαρ φαινεται, οτι παντως μεν ανθρωποι προς το αμαρτανειν πεφυκαμεν. *Origen contra Cels. lib.* 3.—*Rom.* iii. and vii.

(3) It is plainly impoſſible for a man to be morally (*i. e.* truly, perfectly) happy, till he can conform himſelf with delight to the will of his God.

(4) Here it will be proper to ſettle the ideas of *perfection* and *imperfection:* on a right underſtanding of theſe the whole argument reſts. Our ideas of perfection are undoubtedly all relative, in ſome reſpect or other; they always refer to ſome fitneſs; imply an agreement to ſome rule, ſtate, or end: however, we may conſider perfection as of two kinds. *abſolute* and *relative.* Abſolute perfection is ſelf-exiſtent, ſelf-ſufficient good, of every kind, in the higheſt degree; and belongs only to God: it is tranſcendant, and far above our comprehenſion. Relative perfection is complete relative good; *i. e.* the exact fitneſs of a thing to a ſtate or end. It belongs both to God and creatures; to God, as he is fit to produce and govern his works; to creatures, as they are fit to fill their place and end in the creation. This fitneſs is the only right idea of perfection in creatures; they are capable of this relative perfection only. It is uſual, in comparing creatures of ſuperior endowments or qualities with others inferior, to ſay, they

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are more *perfect*; but this is using the word *perfect* improperly for *endued*, or *exalted*, or some word equivalent. Creatures having superior endowments are not, on that account, properly more perfect; inferiors may be as perfect, (*i.e.* as competent to their place and end) and sometimes are more so. As perfection is properly a complete fitness, perfection (in a sensitive and moral creature) is a complete sensitive and moral fitness, or a competence to fill its place, and preserve that order in nature, which God hath appointed to be the condition of happiness and the rule of obedience. Essential to our idea of natural perfection in a sensitive creature is entire happiness; or, at least an entire fitness to the law in which happiness stands. Essential to our idea of moral perfection in a moral creature is entire obedience; or, at least, an entire fitness to obey the moral law. In both respects I say *at least*; because the imperfections of a creature's associates may hinder it, though perfect in itself, from being either entirely happy or entirely obedient. Obedient, I mean, in the sense of a full performance of all that perfection requires. But an entire fitness in itself to be happy and obedient is its perfection: the abstracting of either of these (the deviating from that order which God hath appointed as the condition and law of both) infers *imperfection*. These are the author's ideas of perfection and imperfection pursued in this work. This he desires the reader to take along with him.

Since perfection relates to many ends and objects, we ought, when we reason about it, to reflect what end it is, which we refer to. A thing may be perfect to some ends, and not to others; nay, in moral things, imperfection itself may become necessary in one respect, to give them perfection to another: but it is only when a thing is perfect to all the good ends, belonging to its nature in a state of good, that it is entirely perfect. In considering the perfection of the creation, or any of its parts, we are to consider it in two great respects; viz. its own good, and the final end of it, which is the glory of God. The perfection of the creation, both to its own good and the glory of God, consists in a fulness of all the good properties it has, and a right use of them. It has been already said, what is its final end; the question chiefly to be considered is, what is its own good? Things contributing to good are of great variety; but its chief good (to which all subordinate refers) in the constitution of nature in general, as in that of a human being, lies in a fitness of order, power, virtue, action, and happiness, planted in every variety, and preserved in all the changes, which in its complete state are proper to its nature. In the fulness of these, we as necessarily perceive the good of the creation to consist, as we perceive the creation's existence: and we as necessarily perceive unfitness in these, such as impotence, vice, error in requisite action, and pain, to be its evil; to be imperfection relative to creation's good. Nothing can be more distinct in our minds than good and evil, in that respect; and also in respect to the glory of God. The good of the whole is founded in the good of the parts. The good of each individual part or member, is its fitness to produce and partake in the good of the whole: in things inanimate, it is fitness to produce order; in things of life, it is happiness, power and action, agreeable to all their ends, in a complete

state

ſtate of good; or anſwerable to the law of their entire perfection. The fulneſs of good in all excludes evil; and conſtitutes what we neceſſarily eſteem, the creation's entire perfection. This perfection, we eaſily conceive, admits, by the will of God, of many changes and degrees, ſtill retaining perfection of good: it may be many ways altered, without admitting evil. The creation, if poſſeſſing perfection to its own good, muſt likewiſe poſſeſs perfection to its chief end, the glory of God. In ſuch ſtate it has a fulneſs of perfection in all reſpects. We reaſonably believe, that the creation began in ſuch perfection; and holy ſcripture confirms the belief. This belief is reaſonable; 1ſt. becauſe a workman deſires to make his work complete in all its good properties and uſes: he will give it ſtrength to accompliſh the action he requires, and to preſerve its own frame, ſo long as is fit it ſhould; *i.e.* till ſome condition take place, which requires its failure. So God, who could make his work complete, would make it ſo for all its good and uſe: if he made it for obedience free, he would give it ſtrength competent to that end, and ſecure to it its own happineſs, while that condition ſhould be properly performed. To this his wiſdom, goodneſs, and holineſs, it ſeems, would neceſſarily direct him; becauſe, 2dly, the creation, in perfection to obedience and its own good, would, at the beginning, before evil acting commenced, as well, if not better, anſwer the chief end of it, probation for his glory, as in imperfection to its own good: and its happineſs muſt be pleaſing to him, while conſiſtent with his glory. But it is obvious, that, to anſwer the end of his making it, it muſt have freedom to err in action, and to offend; and ſo be liable to vice and pain, which, in caſe of offence, he creates for puniſhment, and trial, proper to a fallen ſtate. If it will not perfectly fulfil the chief end, his glory, by free obedience; he will fulfil his glory himſelf by the inflicting on it puniſhment. If it will not by obedience, it muſt by puniſhment anſwer the chief end. It muſt loſe ſo much of its own good, as puniſhment for his glory requires. Iſaiah lix. 16, &c. On offending him, the creation muſt fall from that law of its nature, on which is founded its entire obedience and happineſs; that it may be fit to the law of its nature, on which is founded its vice and penalty: it muſt loſe the perfection of its proper ſtate of good, that it may have the perfection of its proper ſtate of evil. It muſt become like a criminal made ſick with ſcourging, ſo that he can neither do his duties as before, nor enjoy the comforts of life, but only be fit to ſuffer the penalty due to his crimes; thinking himſelf well off, if by his feeble efforts at future obedience, he is ſure of pardon and redintegration.

We neceſſarily perceive that moral creatures, made capable of both good and evil in morals, muſt have a moral law, ſuitable to their natures. We neceſſarily perceive, that this law muſt be *the moral fitneſſes or relations, implanted in the natures of things; not excepting other laws, which we call poſitive, founded on theſe laws of nature.* We neceſſarily perceive, that obedience to ſuch law is following it ſtrictly in actions; and not merely following it, but following it with a proper diſpoſition, both for the creature's own happineſs and for the perfectneſs of obedience. This diſpoſition

muſt be *virtuous love*; for nothing elſe can render the creature happy in obedience; nothing elſe can perfect obedience; for love is the chief part of obedience. Without virtuous love the creature does not obey in deſire, if in external action; is not truly honeſt; does not act from a right motive; *the heart is not right in the ſight of God*; the imperfect obedience is not thoroughly acceptable. I ſay then, that *fitneſs requiring moral obedience with love muſt be the moral law of perfectneſs*. Such law, ſuch obedience, muſt be required in a ſtate of full perfection, in a ſtate of perfection conſummate to every good end; in a ſtate of perfection both to the creation's good and to the glory of God. Such law, ſuch obedience, are required by holy ſcripture for our final perfection: the ſame muſt have been required for perfection original. Such law, ſuch obedience, are as indiſpenſible to the order and happineſs of moral creatures, as harmony of notes is to a perfect piece of muſic; and as neceſſary they are to pleaſe God with our righteouſneſs, as harmony in a tune, to pleaſe the human ear. And both from nature and revelation, it is clear, that God wills ſuch free obedience; and intends that we ſhould ſeek our own and the general happineſs in that way of ſubſervience to his glory. The creature's happineſs muſt needs be an inferior end, which never ſhould be put in competition with his glory: but the creature's happineſs and his glory are ends very well conſiſtent; and never ſhould nor would be ſeparated, but by ſome of the creatures tranſgreſſing. From the nature and end of things it is evident, that the creation muſt be liable to incur imperfection with reſpect to obedience to God and its own good. This very liability to imperfection is neceſſary to its perfection, reſpecting its chief end. And imperfection, after offence, becomes a part of its perfection to that end. By the imperfection incurred, it is adapted to ſuffer, as it ought, ſuch penalty as that end requires. It is ſtill an object perfect to that end, either for wrath or grace. By becoming imperfect to the law of good, the law of obedience and happineſs, it is made perfect to the law of evil, the law of penalty, which in ſuch caſe, the chief end requires. When ſin enters, it is fit, that pain or ſome inconvenience (which is a ſpecies of pain) ſhould follow, either to the offending creature, or to the creature offended, or both; that the evil of ſin may appear, that they may be admoniſhed to avoid ſin, which is ſure to ruin true happineſs; and to ſeek happineſs only by obedience, to which only true happineſs is annexed. The creation ſeems to human reaſon to be made and treated juſt as it ought. The fact is no more than this; God having made a creation perfect in uprightneſs and happineſs, to be obedient for his honour, ſecured to it fulneſs of good, while it ſhould remain obedient; but on diſobedience, inflicted penal evil anſwerable to its moral evil. Thus a human maſter will deal by his ſervant. He gives him (what becomes a maſter to do) all that is neceſſary for his comfort; and requires of him due ſervice. While the ſervant is obedient, the maſter continues to give a ſupply of things comfortable; perhaps rewards him farther. But if the ſervant tranſgreſs, the maſter inflicts penalty, according to the tranſgreſſion; which penalty deprives the ſervant of comfort, perhaps of power, or limb; but is neceſſary to the maſter's juſtice and honour. It imperfects the ſervant with reſpect to

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his own good; but perfects him, as the case requires, to an higher end, the honour due to his master. The dealing of God is undeniably right, to shew the attribute of holiness; and also the attribute of grace; for it pleases God, by due methods to restore the perfection of creation's good, in parts, which, by the laws proper to their natur', will admit of repair; and this is his grace. In all this it appears, that God acts upon the common principles of wisdom and rectitude, which guide his rational creatures in things, which they make and govern.

In order to the perfection of the creation to the chief end of its existence, probation for the glory of God, it seems entirely fit, that it should be created, and treated by its author, as is here supposed. It was fit to create it perfect for its proper obedience and happiness; and, on transgression, to curse it with vice and pain as a penalty, in a general hereditary way, during the state of trial; that all intelligent creatures in the system, might know the great demerit of sin by its ill consequences; and be mutually interested for obedience; and in that wretched state which sin hath induced, *may learn obedience by suffering*; that in due time, by righteous endeavours, they may get rid of evil suffering. It is fit, that he finally renovate the system in a state of retribution, in which the good shall be rewarded, and the bad punished individually. And it is fit that all this process shall be made known, to all creatures capable of such knowledge, by revelation, tradition, and history; and that repeated admonitions should be given by revelation. All this is agreeable to, and seems needful for, such a series of probation.

I do not say, that God was in fitness *obliged* to choose the very ends and means in a creation, which he has chosen, and no other; but that the ends and means, he has chosen, are fit. God might have made a creation not liable to moral or natural evil; but I affirm, that *to display all his attributes*, he must, of strict necessity, make a system, which shall be in some way liable to both: he must, of strict necessity, appoint in some way probation, and consequently retribution. Indeed the way or mode of appointing them might be very different from that which is set forth to us. He might retain the fundamental laws, indispensible to that purpose, yet vary the modes of his creation, we know not how much. He might make systems of very different constructions, with very different modifications of those laws. Each might be inhabited with animals of kinds very different from those inhabiting the rest; yet all be equally adapted to the same end. I only insist, that the method, he has taken in the things which we know, is fit; viz. the appointing a system of probation, which admits of no retributions, save such as conduce to probation; to be succeeded by a system of strict retribution. This is agreeable to his wisdom and goodness. Defect and decay, of some sort, every system of probation must be liable to; but the modes of these might be very different from aught which we experience.

It is easy to observe that nothing is to be called defect, or decay, with respect to the chief purpose of God, his own glory. Nothing imperfect to that end can enter into his works; but all, which is possible therein, must be subservient to that end. What we call defect, decay, and evil,

(which really are ſuch reſpecting the good of the creatures, which ſuffer them) are no defect, nor decay, nor imperfection, reſpecting the final end of God: they contribute to that purpoſe, as well as do the growth and perfection of creation's own good. All evil, except moral evil (which is entirely the free act of the creature) is the wiſe and juſt creation of God, no leſs than is good; it is founded on ſimilar laws and conditions; and equally anſwers his end. Iſai xlv. 7. Though it be great imperfection with reſpect to creation's good, it is perfect to his end of trying and puniſhing fallen creatures. All the evil he creates is with a view to moral good; to make his creatures ſenſible, how important moral good is to their natural good; how ſacred in his ſight. Evil is, as we ſay, *good* to that end; meaning it is fit to promote that good purpoſe. Not that it is good in itſelf, either in the ſight of God or his creatures; not good by nature, or conſtituent of good; but conducive to the good purpoſe of making free creatures exert their own good powers to amend in their actions, and avoid it; or elſe to puniſh them as they deſerve, if they do not. Nothing, but what is evil in itſelf, could ſo much conduce to moral good; and conſequently to the true good of the creation, by making all contribute by proper obedience to avoid, and totally exclude it. If creatures do not take occaſion from natural evil to avoid moral evil, in order to get rid of natural evil, they may be induced by natural evil to commit more moral evil, and ſo rivet natural evil on themſelves for ever. In this caſe, it will to them be not only evil in itſelf, but evil in all its effects, excluding them from all good, under the irreverſible ſentence of an indignant God. Thus let the reader ſee, that natural evil is a perfection or fitneſs, reſpecting the chief end; and is unfit only reſpecting the virtue and happineſs of the creature. Even moral evil, the worſt of imperfections, does not diminiſh, but advance the chief end. Yet we juſtly lament both ſorts of imperfection, as being ruinous to the creature, whilſt the chief end might have been as fully ſerved without them, had creatures obeyed: although, without a poſſibility of them, it could not.

Let this concluſion be particularly obſerved—*If the creation be infected with vice and miſery, it is truly and emphatically imperfect; though it be ſtill perfect to the chief end, the glory of God; for its true entire perfection conſiſts in a perfection to virtue and happineſs, to the entire excluſion of evil; and in a perfection to the chief end likewiſe. Such ſtate is its* FULNESS *of* PERFECTION.

(5) The word *guilt* is here uſed in an improper ſenſe. It, and all ſynonymous words, muſt be ſo uſed among fataliſts, who exclude *freedom* out of their idea of a moral being. It here ſignifies a *neceſſary* deviation from a moral rule, inſtead of a *free* deviation, which is the proper ſenſe of the word. It may be right to obſerve, that this word is ſometimes uſed, as the word *ſin* generally is, to ſignify either an *act* or a *temper*: *i. e.* either the tranſgreſſion of a law, or a depravity of mind. Hence ariſes the diſtinction of *actual* and *original* guilt or ſin; the firſt ſignifying tranſgreſſion, and the laſt, innate depravity. This innate depravity, vice, or taint of the moral powers, is derived, like the infirmity and mortality of the

the natural powers, from parents to their children. In this poem, I have always taken the word *ſin* in the uſual latitude, to ſignify either the act or the temper, or both, as occaſion required.

(6) Οτι αρετης μεν εαν ανελης το εκουσιον, ανειλες αυτης και την ουσιαν. *Orig. contra Cels. lib.* 4. See *Tertullian* and *Lactantius* to the ſame purpoſe.

(7) I ſay, *free to good and evil.* The poſſibility of theſe depends not only on the freedom of will, but alſo on the nature of objects and deſires. We can only converſe with objects known: if therefore we knew no objects capable of abuſe, we could not offend: we can exert only the deſires we have; if therefore we had no deſires capable of abuſe, we could not offend: yet might the will be perfectly free in its own nature. Whether moral merit and demerit attend the actions of all free beings, we cannot tell: they probably do; becauſe otherwiſe we cannot ſee, wherein the uſe of freedom lies; any other purpoſe might be accompliſhed, probably, without freedom. Note, will is to be diſtinguiſhed from deſire, as in the ſecond Book will be explained.

(8) Suppoſing the ſyſtem of things to have been created or erected out of eternal principles, ſuch as here deſcribed, we may carry the hypotheſis farther, and ſuppoſe thoſe principles to be ſuch, that, by being arranged in a certain order, they would neceſſarily form a ſyſtem of perfect happineſs; but that, on the leaſt deviation from that order, they would neceſſarily fall into miſery beyond God's prevention. This ſuppoſition affords a reaſon for God's requiring virtue in order to happineſs; a reaſon which may ſatisfy thoſe, who think happineſs ought to be the ſupreme end of the creation, and who maintain that God ſhould not, (if he could do otherwiſe) ſacrifice happineſs to virtue; or ſhould not make happineſs to depend on virtue. *It is plain, if God was able to make things happy only in one certain order, and if the leaſt deviation from that order would neceſſarily produce miſery beyond his prevention, he muſt require virtue of free agents, to preſerve that order requiſite to happineſs.* It is ſtrange that this notion has never been ſtarted before, amidſt all the conjectures of the many ſubtile and fruitful heads which have agitated this ſubject. However, notwithſtanding the plauſibility which, I imagine, ſome perſons may conceive to be in this notion, it ſeems to me clearly to be falſe: the plan laid down in this poem is the truth. It was not want of power to make things as he pleaſed, which laid God under a neceſſity of requiring virtue in order to happineſs: the only neceſſity, in that reſpect, which he lay under, was, that ſort of neceſſity which ariſes from a moral fitneſs antecedent to his will, and from his wiſdom and rectitude, by which he is invariably determined to purſue that fitneſs, or to do what is wiſeſt and beſt. He created the principles of things out of nothing; and could have eſtabliſhed happineſs independent of virtue, if it had been the beſt and wiſeſt ſo to do. But it was more worthy of him, as a moral God, and more honourable to his creatures (who on that account received nobler powers) to conſtitute his ſyſtem as it is, with a capacity for virtue and vice

vice, and, in conſequence thereof, liable to happineſs and miſery; and to appoint its ſupreme end to be his own glory, both as he is a Creator and moral governor. To have appointed his creatures' happineſs to be the ſupreme end, would have required a ſyſtem incapable of deviation, and would have done far leſs honour to him and his works. And further obſerve, it is by the moral neceſſity ariſing firſt from his own nature, and next from the nature which he beſtowed on his creatures, that he was led to require the ſatisfaction of Chriſt in order to redeem the world.

(9) *The fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God.* Pſal. xiv. A witty divine juſtly obſerves, *that nobody but a fool could ſay it.* I ſuppoſe he means, that *the inviſible things of God are ſo clearly underſtood by the things that are made,* (Rom. i. 20.) that a man muſt be extremely deficient, either in the ſtrength or uſe of his underſtanding, if he does not perceive the *being* of a God from his works: certain apprehenſions of God are ſo congenial to human nature, that he who wants ſuch apprehenſions can ſcarcely be ſaid to poſſeſs an human ſhare of underſtanding. However, let it be granted that a fool, for once, may be right; admit there is no God: What then? Where is the conſolation of the thought? Why, he will boaſt, with the Epicurean,

Quare religio pedibus ſubjecta viciſſim
Obteritur: nos exæquat victoria cælo. Luc. *lib.* 1. *v.* 79.

Religion conquer'd, cruſh'd in turn ſhall lie,
While us the conqueſt equals with the ſky.

But in this he will be a fool ſtill!—For though he indeed cruſhes religion, if he can annihilate the object of it, yet he gains no ſecurity from future exiſtence, nor from pain: for let him ſuppoſe what he will to have brought him into this preſent ſtate, he muſt allow, the ſame cauſe may bring him into another ſtate, and another, and ſo on to eternity: and every ſucceeding ſtate may be (if the cauſe ſo inclines) as painful as any hell which man can imagine, or God can create.

The atheiſt ſuppoſes all principles to be ſelf-exiſtent; among which he muſt include his ſoul, whatever it be. He muſt ſuppoſe it independent on cauſe, as to its exiſtence and qualities; and conſequently muſt ſuppoſe that life is inſeparable from it. And, though he ſuppoſes it dependent on cauſe, as to the exertion of its qualities, (that is, it may require fit objects and occaſions in order to its exertions), and therefore its exertions may, at whiles, be ſuſpended for want of the conditions neceſſary to its acting and ſuffering; yet he muſt allow, that, whenever the conditions neceſſary to its exertions occur, then muſt its actions and ſufferings revive; and, as thoſe conditions have occurred in this ſtate, they may occur in another and another to all eternity. Let him ſuppoſe the principles to act by *chance, fate,* or *ſelf-deſign,* ſtill the conſequence will be much the ſame. Seeing that the principles are ſuppoſed independent on cauſe for exiſtence and qualities, it follows probably, that neither their exiſtence nor qualities

can

can be annihilated: and as they cannot be annihilated, but muſt ſtill act together, either by chance, fate, or deſign, it muſt be acknowledged improbable, if not impoſſible, that life ſhould be long unoccupied; and as life cannot be ſuppoſed to be long unoccupied, ſo neither can we juſtly hope, on any atheiſtic ſcheme, that it will in future be happier than it is at preſent; for, as far as we are able to judge of the component principles of things, there is no neceſſity in their natures by which we ſhall be neceſſarily carried into an happier ſtate: neither is there ſo much as a probability in their natures from which an happier ſtate may be expected: but a worſe ſtate poſſibly may enſue.

Nunc ratio nulla eſt reſtandi, nulla facultas:
Æternas quoniam pœnas in morte timendum. LUC. *lib.* 1. *v.* 3.

Now, to reſiſt, no pow'r, no means, we know;
We ſtill muſt dread, in death, eternal woe.

Why did not Lucretius foreſee that his own lines might thus be turned againſt him? He applies them againſt religion; but they may be far more juſtly applied againſt atheiſm. It has been ſhewn, that, on any ſcheme of atheiſm, there is great reaſon to dread eternal miſery; becauſe there is not any thing imaginable, in ſuch a ſcheme, which can rationally be ſuppoſed able to prevent miſery or to beſtow happineſs; but, on the ſcheme of religion, there is great reaſon to hope eternal happineſs; becauſe there is a power ſuppoſed able both to prevent miſery and to beſtow happineſs. How wretchedly miſtaken, then, are atheiſts, who think to elude the dread of a future ſtate by excluding God and providence! Such an excluſion alone can render a future ſtate dreadful to men, who are what men ought to be. The admiſſion of God and providence diveſts a future ſtate of all terrors to worthy men, and to all but perſons who both are wicked and reſolve to continue ſo. On any atheiſtic ſcheme, we can hope nothing better in a future ſtate than we experience in this; nay, worſe may enſue; but, on the ſcheme of religion, if we live well, we may reaſonably hope what is infinitely better than what we now experience, and may abandon all dread of future pain. The atheiſt can propoſe to gain nothing but, firſt, a licence to ſin, (which, as his conſcience tells him, it is fit there ſhould be a God to puniſh; and which, as experience tells him, renders the preſent life more miſerable), and, ſecondly, a probability of never being happier, but rather far more miſerable. This is all the atheiſt can gain. But the religious man juſtly and nobly propoſes to gain virtue and heaven: in conſequence, he acts ſo as to ſecure the greateſt temporal comfort, the ineffably pleaſing hope of being exquiſitely happy for ever hereafter. What joy will the atheiſt balance with this? For a man to be as ſure as reaſon, revelation, and a well-ſpent life, can make him, of ſoon exchanging this ſcene of confuſion, wickedneſs, and miſery, for one of holineſs, harmony, and joy, is certainly the moſt ſublime and raviſhing pleaſure, of which mortal is capable. If, then, thou wouldeſt be happy, here or hereafter, reject atheiſm both in belief and practice; believe in God, and live accordingly.

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Let me add, that they, who ſuppoſe the chief end of the creation to be *happineſs*, are, with reſpect to futurity, in almoſt as bad an opinion as atheiſts: for, if *happineſs* be the chief end of the creation, the world is now as happy as poſſible. Was happineſs the chief end, God muſt make creation at firſt, and continue it always, in as happy a ſtate as he is able to give: and, if the world now enjoys all the happineſs God can give, we have ſmall room to hope we ſhall ever be in a happier ſituation: a ſuppoſition to many, and I am ſure to me, not very comfortable. But, thank God, the ſuppoſition is falſe. The end of the preſent ſtate is *probation*, and not happineſs; therefore we are not to expect full happineſs here, but as a reward hereafter, which God can raiſe as high as he pleaſes.

(10) By *poſitive neceſſity* in a thing (*i. e.* in any object of the mind) I mean ſuch a neceſſity, that the thing can *neither be imagined not to be, nor to be otherwiſe*. Such is the neceſſity in time and ſpace, and in the rules of fitneſs and their contraries: I can neither imagine their non-exiſtence, nor their exiſting otherwiſe, than they do. By *extant neceſſity* in a thing, I mean ſuch a neceſſity, *that the thing is, becauſe it is; while yet I can imagine, that it might have never been, or might be otherwiſe*. Such is the neceſſity, belonging to all ſubſtance and its modes: for we can imagine of any ſubſtance, that it might not be at all, or that it might be otherwiſe than it is. When a ſubſtance is, it neceſſarily is; or certainly is, when it is: and it muſt neceſſarily continue to be, and to be as it is, if no ſubſtance have power to annihilate it, or to alter it. Nothing but ſubſtance can annihilate or alter ſubſtance; for nothing but ſubſtance has power: it is power (active or paſſive, or both) which diſtinguiſhes ſubſtance from non-ſubſtance. Such diſtinction, as that here noted, evidently exiſts between the exiſtence of ſubſtance and the exiſtence of time and ſpace. Perhaps ſome perſon may find better terms, by which to denote the diſtinction. Subſtance is diſtinguiſhed into dependent and independent. A ſubſtance, of which we can ſuppoſe nothing able to annihilate or alter it, exiſts by *independent* neceſſity. A ſubſtance, which we can ſuppoſe to be annihilated or altered by the power of another ſubſtance, exiſts by *dependent* neceſſity; *i. e.* it neceſſarily exiſts, and exiſts as it is, if the power on which it is dependent, does not annihilate or alter it; but it is dependent on the ſaid power for being and manner of being: in other words, its neceſſity of exiſting is only what the ſaid power permits. In reſpect to the nature of God, ſince he does not exiſt by what is called here *an abſolute* or *poſitive* neceſſity, like that of time and ſpace, we can imagine his abſence or non-exiſtence as eaſily as that of any thing elſe; yet we cannot at all imagine, that he ever can be abſent or non-exiſtent; becauſe exiſtent and preſent he is, and with independence, that we can imagine nothing, which can make him be otherwiſe. Since God is, and is independent on cauſe, both for exiſtence and manner of exiſtence; it follows, that the divine nature muſt eternally be what it is. And this is a neceſſity approaching to *poſitive* or *abſolute* the neareſt that we can conceive in any ſubſtance whatever. This neceſſity is the ſame in effects as

if

if it were abſolute; for, though we can as eaſily imagine the non-exiſtence of God as of any thing elſe, yet, once ſuppoſing his exiſtence, we cannot ſuppoſe him to ceaſe to exiſt, becauſe he is independent on cauſe; therefore the conſequences of his exiſtence muſt be juſt the ſame as if he exiſted by abſolute neceſſity. It is plain, that God exiſts by *independent* neceſſity; and all derived ſubſtances exiſt by neceſſity *dependent*.

(11) By *chance*, *fate*, and *deſign*, is only meant the mode in which things *are* or *act*. *Chance* and *deſign* are only modes of *action*: *fate* is conſidered as a mode of *being* as well as of *action*. Thus time and ſpace are ſaid to exiſt in the mode of *poſitive* or *abſolute fate*; becauſe there is ſuch a neceſſity of their exiſtence, that we cannot ſo much as imagine their non-exiſtence. God is ſaid to exiſt eternally in the mode of *extant fate*; becauſe being ſelf-exiſtent and ſubject to no power, he muſt conſequently exiſt eternally of independent neceſſity. All other beings exiſt in the mode of *dependence*: but, if God will not annihilate them, they alſo muſt exiſt, by extant neceſſity, for ever. Fate is alſo conſidered as a mode of *action*, as are chance and deſign. Thus, we ſay that a thing acts by fate, when it acts neceſſarily: we ſay it acts by chance, when it acts without neceſſity or deſign; *i. e.* when it acts freely, but not intentionally. Free beings often act by chance, and alone are capable of acting in that mode. We ſay a thing acts by deſign when it acts both freely and intentionally. Note, that chance, fate, and deſign are only *modes* of being or acting; and not the *cauſe* of the being or action, to which they belong. Miſguided by certain not unuſual forms of ſpeech, men too commonly conſider chance and fate as *cauſes*, or ſomethings, diſtinct from the being they belong to, by which the being exiſts and is governed; which is perfectly abſurd and deluſive.

(12) The word *eternal* is ſometimes uſed as equivalent to *ſelf-exiſtent* or *uncauſed*. But ſome, perhaps, will not allow it to have properly that force. "For, ſay they, although what is ſelf-exiſtent muſt be eternal "*a priori*, yet what is ſo eternal may not be ſelf-exiſtent; for we can "ſuppoſe an eternal effect proceeding from an eternal cauſe: and, indeed, "we think it probable that the eternal cauſe might actually produce eternal effects. Not but that we alſo grant the contrary to be poſſible: for "the ſaid cauſe can produce effects in any point of time, either by making "a new creation, or by altering or annihilating an old, or in any poſſible way it pleaſes. We only contend, that, although the world was "*created*, yet we cannot thence neceſſarily conclude that it was not eternal: to obtain certainty in that point we muſt refer to tradition or revelation: for we can conceive a poſſibility of its being eternal, both as "to matter and form, by conſidering it as an eternal effect of an eternal "cauſe."

Now, I confeſs, that in this notion there appears no impoſſibility. Our difficulty of admitting the poſſibility of an eternal effect from an eternal cauſe, ariſes partly from the prejudice we get from being uſed to conſider temporary cauſes and effects, but chiefly from our inability to comprehend

eternity, or to have a positive idea of any thing eternal. We are apt to consider an effect as posterior to its cause, both in order of nature and order of time. In order of nature it must be posterior; but in order of time it may not; nay, in some sense it cannot; for, in some sense, the cause and effect are always co-eval: and we cannot conceive of them otherwise. To understand this, we must distinguish a causing power from a cause. A causing power may exist without being a cause, *i.e.* without acting; but, if it acts, or is a cause, it must produce an effect in the same moment, and that in proportion to the force it exerts. Thus, the moment a power becomes properly a cause, it produces an effect: we cannot conceive of it otherwise. Therefore, if we will suppose God to be properly an eternal cause, *i.e.* to have acted eternally, he must have produced eternally some effects. Therefore the difficulty truly lies, not in conceiving the possibility of an eternal effect, but in conceiving the possibility of an eternal cause, *i.e.* a power eternally acting. If we admit the cause, the effect must be admitted. It will be granted, I suppose, that God *thought* eternally; why not also *act* and *cause* eternally in any other respect? In short, the whole difficulty at last lies in this; our faculties are made to comprehend only temporary and finite things; and we can form no positive idea of any thing eternal; we can only see the possibility and necessity of something being so.

Eternity and infinity, and all things of which they are ever predicated, have always greatly puzzled metaphysicians; though, in some cases, it is strange that they should. The reason is, chiefly, that our faculties are made only to comprehend temporary and finite ideas, and therefore can but partially, and very imperfectly, conceive of eternity and infinity; and partly, that men are apt to bewilder themselves in words, especially when writing, conversing, or thinking, upon difficult subjects. Some have professed to doubt whether space be infinite, or time eternal; which no man can possibly do, who uses the words in their usual and proper meaning. From time and space (which are evidently without beginning and ending) we acquire the ideas of infinity and eternity. Infinity is most properly predicated of time and space; and eternity is most properly predicated of time; for it is infinity of time. When infinity and eternity are predicated of other things, it is as those things relate to time or space; or else it is an improper sense of the words. We can imagine nothing to be properly infinite, or susceptible of proper infinity, whose quantity does not require an equal quantity of either time or space for it to exist in. Without such relation to time or space, we cannot be certain that the quantity of any thing is, or can be, properly infinite. No wonder it is, that great perplexity has appeared in attempts to define time and space: they are so simple, as to admit of no definition. Without definition, every man has clear ideas of them: attempting to define them can only serve to obscure them. One reason of perplexity hath been, that we predicate the same things of them as of substances;* which makes some rashly call

* Note, by *substance* is meant *something, which is the basis of power.* The *having power*, either passive or active, or both, is what distinguishes substance from time, space, and nothing; which all have, in some sort, qualities or modes, but have not power.

them

them either ſubſtances or modes of ſubſtance; though nothing appears in the mind more diſtinct than the difference between them and ſubſtance; nay, alſo between them and all modes of ſubſtance. Surely, nothing can be a greater impertinence than to confound them with ſubſtances, on account of ſome predicates being applied to both as common to both. There are ſtill ſome predicates peculiar to each, which will keep them for ever very diſtinct. A clown of common ſenſe could never miſtake their diſtinctions: uncommon abſurdities are the privilege of great philoſophers. Space has ſometimes been conſidered as a ſubſtance; and ſometimes both it and time have been conſidered as modes of ſubſtance; yet nothing can be more repugnant to the idea every man muſt neceſſarily have of time and ſpace. We as clearly conceive them to be diſtinct from, and independent of, all ſubſtance, as we conceive one ſubſtance to be different from another, or apprehend that nothing is not ſomething. Some will have them to be mere ideas. But with equal, if not with better reaſon, might it be inſiſted, that ſubſtances are only ideas; for my mind forces me to conceive, that its ideas of time and ſpace ariſe from time and ſpace as things external, as much as that its ideas of ſubſtances ariſe from ſubſtances as things external: and it forces me to conceive of time and ſpace as impoſſible to be ſuppoſed away; whereas I can eaſily ſuppoſe ſubſtances, and conſequently ideas too, to be all away, and nothing but empty time and ſpace to remain. It is ſaid, we acquire our ideas of time and ſpace by means of ſubſtances; and, if there were no ſubſtances, we could have no ideas of time and ſpace: therefore time and ſpace are either ſubſtances, or modes of ſubſtances, or ideas. This is nothing to the purpoſe! I grant that we could have no ideas but through ſubſtances: it is through ſubſtance that we acquire the idea of nothing: but will any one conclude thence that nothing is ſomething, or that nothing is the mode of ſomething, or that it is a mere idea? We acquire the idea of ſubſtances themſelves through ſecondary qualities, (as they are called), which are truly nothing but ideas; yet will any body therefore ſay that there is no ſubſtance? Nothing can be more abſurd and contrary to the feelings of his own mind. It ſignifies not, therefore, in this argument, how an idea is acquired: the queſtion is, what does it repreſent? Does it repreſent ſubſtance or modes of ſubſtance? Or is it a mere idea? *i.e.* a mere effect on the mind? Or does it repreſent time and ſpace in ſuch a manner, that the mind neceſſarily conceives them to be external to itſelf, yet to be neither ſubſtance nor mode of ſubſtance? My mind tells me, and that beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that the laſt is the truth. Time and ſpace are repreſented to my mind as having an *abſolute neceſſity of exiſting*; (if I may uſe the word, *exiſting*, of objects which are no ſubſtances. Language obliges us to ſpeak of time and ſpace, and of mere negations, as if they were ſubſtances; which cauſes great embarraſſment). This abſolute neceſſity of exiſting is peculiar to time and ſpace; and fitneſſes and unfitneſſes: for I can eaſily imagine all ſubſtances (and conſequently all ideas) to be utterly annihilated, and blank time and ſpace to remain behind. Let me not be miſunderſtood, as if I ſaid, that I can imagine any *cauſe*, which can annihilate all ſubſtance; for I can imagine no cauſe which can

annihilate God: therefore I cannot imagine a poſſibility of annihilating all ſubſtance. But, without conſidering the cauſe or poſſibility of ſuch an event, I can imagine the event itſelf; or I can picture on my mind the falling of all ſubſtance into nothing. This is all I mean, and is enough for my purpoſe. I can imagine all ſubſtance to be reduced to nothing, or imagine the abſence of all ſubſtance; but I cannot ſo much as imagine, or picture on my mind, the extinction or abſence of time and ſpace. When all other things are imagined to be gone, time and ſpace muſt, of neceſſity, be imagined to remain. And though I cannot *comprehend* an infinite ſpace or an eternal time, *i. e.* have a poſitive idea of infinity and eternity; yet I can and muſt *apprehend*, that ſpace is infinite, and time eternal. I am under a neceſſity of *apprehending them thus*, as much as of apprehending them at all. But my limited faculties will permit me to *comprehend* only a few parts, or finite quantities of each: I perceive them to be unlimited; but I find my faculties are limited to take in but a ſmall portion of them. As time and ſpace are independent of ſubſtance, ſo is ſubſtance independent of time and ſpace: *i. e.* ſubſtance depends not on time and ſpace for exiſtence; only it muſt neceſſarily bear relation to them, as neceſſarily exiſting in them. Such relation ſome logicians have termed *extrinſic modes* of ſubſtance; a term which may be admitted as uſeful in ſome caſes, if care is taken not to be miſled by it. Evident it is, that ſome ſubſtance muſt have been eternal; *i. e.* preſent to every point of time; for otherwiſe there could have been no ſubſtance now. The ſelf-exiſtent being, or God, muſt have been eternal: we know not whether any other ſubſtance was ſo or not. Some ſubſtance may be infinite, *i. e.* preſent to every point of ſpace; but we know not that any ſubſtance is ſo, becauſe we can only perceive a poſſibility of it; neceſſity of it we cannot perceive; we can only conceive a poſſibility of ſeveral things, of which we can ſee no neceſſity nor probability. Thus (notwithſtanding what ſome perſons have argued to the contrary) I can apprehend the poſſibility of an infinite number or ſeries of ſubſtances: I can apprehend the poſſibility of an infinite ſubſtantial line of an infinite ſubſtantial ſurface, or of a ſubſtance infinite in all dimenſions: but I can perceive no neceſſity of any of theſe: on the contrary, my experience of ſubſtances inclines me to believe, that there is no ſuch thing as a ſubſtance infinite in any of theſe reſpects, excepting the Divine Being, who probably is infinitely immenſe, or occupies all ſpace, all infinitude. But, though I can and muſt *apprehend* the poſſibility of all theſe infinities, yet, ſuch is the nature and operation of my mind, that I can only partially *comprehend* them; *i. e.* I can have a poſitive idea of only a ſmall part of any of them. Theſe notions are eaſy enough to perſons, who can purſue their ideas without confuſion. The confuſion is owing to our partial way of conceiving infinity and eternity, and to the embarraſſment ariſing from words. Language obliges us to uſe the ſame words and phraſes in ſpeaking of objects very different; *viz.* time and ſpace, and ſubſtance and nothing. But, howſoever we may *talk*, we cannot *conceive*, of time and ſpace, and ſubſtance and ideas, *&c.* otherwiſe than I have diſtinguiſhed them; for to conceive otherwiſe would be repugnant to our neceſſary ſenſe or perception of each; and therefore impoſſible: people, who pretend to conceive otherwiſe, only fancy, or rather ſay, that they do.

Infinity

Infinity is primarily applicable to time and ſpace. It may be applied to all things, which have quantity ſo relative to time and ſpace, that each portion or degree of it requires a ſeparate portion of time or ſpace to exiſt in; that it muſt be meaſured by an equal quantity of time or ſpace; that it cannot be increaſed, without its occupying a larger portion of time or ſpace, commenſurate to its increaſe; nor be decreaſed without its receding from a portion of time or ſpace, equal to its decreaſe. Of no other ſort of quantity can we imagine the poſſibility of any infinity, at leaſt to be certain. We can indeed imagine different quantities of certain qualities in ſubſtances, and we can imagine plurality of kind and number in ſuch qualities, to exiſt in one point or portion of time and ſpace; as heat, life, thought, &c. may co-exiſt in the ſame portion of time and ſpace; and the quantities or degrees of each may be ſuppoſed to be very different, without any difference in the quantity of time or ſpace, which they occupy. The ſubſtance, in which ſuch qualities inhere, may occupy but juſt the ſame quantity of time or ſpace, whether the degrees of thoſe qualities be much or little; conſequently the much or little in them makes no difference, with reſpect to the quantity of the time or ſpace which they occupy. But then, although we can imagine the degrees of them to be greater or leſs in the ſame portion of time or ſpace, we can imagine no infinity of them in the ſame portion: to imagine any infinity of them, we muſt ſuppoſe an extenſion or duration of them, through infinite portions of time or ſpace. Of nothing can we imagine infinity poſſible (at leaſt to be certain) but of what implies, that each portion, unit, or degree of it, poſſeſſes a commenſurate different part of time or ſpace. Infinity is applicable to lines, ſurfaces, capacities, number, duration; and that *â parte*, as well as *in toto*. In contemplating theſe modes, we find ſeveral infinities. A line drawn from my body *ad infinitum* is one infinite; another line on the other ſide *ad infinitum* is another infinite. Thus I can imagine as many infinite lines to converge in my body, as can fall on one centre. The number of lines cannot indeed without interfering one with another before they reach the centre, be infinite; only a finite number of lines can meet in one centre, without interfering firſt. To imagine an infinite number of lines, I muſt ſuppoſe them either to be parallel, or ſome way croſſing one another. If an infinite line ſhould be filled with particles of matter, the number of particles in that line would be infinite; another ſuch line ſo filled would contain another infinite number. And ſeveral infinite numbers thus imagined may all be conſidered as one infinite number. Thus it is evident that infinite numbers may be multiplied and ſubtracted. From any mode of infinite number ſubtract what number you pleaſe, the remaining number will be infinite, ſuppoſing, (as the caſe requires) that ſtill an infinite ſpace, *a parte quâvis*, is occupied by any objects of number, as ſuppoſe by particles of matter. In like manner to any mode of infinite number may any number be added; infinite numbers may be added to infinite numbers; provided that an infinite portion of ſpace be left unpre-occupied. For inſtance, if the fixed ſtars be ſuppoſed to be ſpread infinitely through ſpace, their number muſt be infinite in all directions; yet, as the ſpaces between them will admit of more, many infinite num-

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bers of them more might be added. But it is evident, that infinite ſpace may be ſo entirely filled, as to admit no addition of them. It is evident that any part of ſpace (as for inſtance the ſpace of the ſolar ſyſtem) might be ſo crouded with bodies, as to admit no more: conſequently all ſpace might be occupied in the ſame manner: infinite ſpace might be filled with an infinite number of bodies, or with many infinite numbers, ſo that it could contain no more.

I muſt ſubjoin, that to a finite quantity of any thing, whoſe increaſe requires an equally increaſed quantity of time or ſpace, I can ſuppoſe an infinite increaſe or addibility: but the contrary, viz. an infinite decreaſe or diviſibility of any thing finite I cannot ſuppoſe. Nothing, which is finite, can be infinitely decreaſeable or diviſible: for every thing finite conſiſts of a finite number of points, beyond which the decreaſe or diviſibility of it cannot proceed. I may inſtance a particle or portion of matter: I can ſuppoſe other particles or portions to be added to it infinitely; but I cannot ſuppoſe this one particle or portion to be infinitely diviſible. The perpetually dividing it, and conſequently the perpetually reducing it into parts of ſmaller dimenſions, muſt at length reduce all dimenſion away, or reduce every part to a point, to annihilation. A particle or portion cannot be divided or reduced into more points, than the finite ſpace, which it originally occupied, does contain. My mind indeed is as capable of dividing into parts *ad infinitum*, *i. e.* of multiplying, as it is of adding *ad infinitum:* but I ſee clearly that infinite diviſion is only an operation of my mind, and that the nature of finite is incapable of ſuch diviſion. The nature of things does not depend on the operation of my mind. It is confounding one thing with another, which makes all the difficulty in theſe queſtions: if we would conſider every thing ſimply, as it is in itſelf repreſented to us, and obſerve in what manner our minds operate concerning it, all would be eaſy.

(13) It is true, we muſt ſuppoſe the Divine Being himſelf to poſſeſs an excellency infinitely tranſcending the moſt excellent of his works, and to exiſt in all his aptitude to produce other beings, without any previous wiſdom to cauſe his excellence and aptitude: but this is not ſo hard to conceive in him, as is an uncauſed aptitude in other beings. His uncauſed fitneſs (both in himſelf and to produce other beings) is agreeable to reaſon to ſuppoſe: but a fitneſs, without cauſe, among innumerable different beings, is not agreeable to reaſon to ſuppoſe: we naturally conclude that their fitneſs is the work of a divine intellect; as, when we ſee a houſe or a picture, we naturally conclude it to be the work of an architect or painter.

(14) This conſideration, that the ideas of all things, real or poſſible, exiſted in God before things themſelves had being, does, above all others, convince us of the immenſe diſparity between him and ourſelves. This, added to the conſideration of his power, which produced to being ſuch things as he thought fit, is enough to overwhelm us with amazement and

awe

awe, in the contemplation of his ſelf-exiſtent, unfathomable, and glorious nature.

If any things were created eternally, the ideas of them in the mind of God could not be before them in point of time; but, in order of nature, the ideas muſt be firſt.

The ſame divine power, which produces the ſmalleſt effect, can produce the greateſt, and produce all, which imply no contradiction, and with equal eaſe; there being nothing to hinder one ſuch effect rather than another. His wiſdom comprehends the knowledge, and his power the efficiency of all things alike. Nothing is impoſſible or difficult with him, which does not involve contradiction of ideas.

(15) Nothing is more certain, for of nothing have we more frequent experience, than this—viz. that the will, or ſelf-acting power, is (properly ſpeaking) never moved by any thing: what we improperly call *motives* (as perceptions, paſſions, and objects) only move the ſenſe; and are only occaſions or moral inducements, for the will to move itſelf. Its power of motion is entirely independent of them, excepting as they preſent ends for it to move itſelf to, if it will. By virtue of his will, man is capable of acting without any view, and of determining himſelf without any motive; as well as qualified to purſue any end or object indifferently. Yet, in conſequence of the two modes of his ſenſe (reaſon and paſſion) he generally acts with deſign, and purſues ſuch objects as to his ſenſe are agreeable. By the frame of his nature he is apt to conſider, as his principal end, thoſe two things which are the moſt agreeable to the two modes of his ſenſe; thoſe two things are, *fitneſs* and *happineſs*. The Stoics profeſſed the firſt of them (το καλον, honeſtum) to be the principal end; the Epicureans profeſſed the latter (ηδονη, voluptas) as ſuch; and all men do, in ſome ſort, acknowledge both, as the great ends of human nature. But if we look farther; and conſider, what is the ſupreme end of the creation; we ſhall diſcover, that the aforeſaid ends are only ſubordinate to the ſupreme end; which is, and muſt be, the *Glory of God*, or the exerciſe and diſplay of the divine attributes. We ſhall perceive then, that God has made it our duty, as a teſt of our regard to this chief end, that we ſhould follow *fitneſs* always, and *happineſs* only as co-incident with it. If we deviate from *fitneſs*, we ſhall not indeed leſſen *God's glory* (for that will be equally advanced in our puniſhment as it would have been in our happineſs): but we ſhall prove our diſregard of his glory; and, in conſequence, ſhall juſtly forfeit our happineſs, which, as obſerved, is not our chief end, but the concomitant and reward of our duty: and we ſhall actually leſſen the welfare of the creation, which is rightly made to depend on the creatures, on their preſerving a juſt regard to *fitneſs* and the divine honour.

Here we may obſerve, that revealed religion diſcovers to us, what indeed ſeems obvious enough in nature, though it was not diſcerned by the heathen philoſophers, viz. *that the glory of God is the ſupreme end of man.*

(16) Here obſerve, that Scripture entirely repreſents the *holineſs* of God as his principal attribute, and conſequently as the ultimate end of all his works:

works: his other attributes appear to be exerted only in ſubſervience to this. Exodus xxxiv. 14. Lev. xi. 44. Iſai. lvii. 15. Jerem. ix. 24. 1 Peter i. 16. And is this ſurpriſing? Does not the holineſs of God neceſſarily appear to us to be his ſublimeſt attribute; even that, which the moſt truly conſtitutes him God? It is that to which our minds inſtinctively yield the higheſt honour: it is that, which the whole fabric of nature ſeems chiefly accommodated to diſplay: as, in the ſequel of this poem, will fully appear. Indeed, in the view only of things preſent, the obſervation holds true in general, *that God's love or hatred cannot be known by all that is before us*; for one event happens to the righteous and to the wicked: and this too is proper in a ſtate of probation. But, if we ſurvey the full account of things from the beginning to the end, as ſet forth in the hiſtory and prophecies of Scripture, and confirmed by other records, we ſhall ſee that the whole order of things is conducted upon a moſt wiſe plan of probation, in which the ſpecial interpoſition of God, as far as neceſſary or proper, is ſtrikingly exhibited; and we ſhall be ſatisfied from the account, by ſeeing things applied to that purpoſe (probation for the glory of God) for which their natures appear eminently to be fitted. Such an account of *paſt* and *future* is evidently neceſſary to evince and illuſtrate a divine providence; and conſequently to give us the moſt noble and uſeful ideas of God. For this reaſon (were there no other) a divine revelation and hiſtory are neceſſary, as being the only means of conveying the moſt important knowledge: for, from only our ſight of nature, we can only learn what is preſent; a degree of knowledge quite inadequate to the purpoſes of religion and morality. As a revelation was neceſſary, ſo does the bible appear to be that revelation wanted: for its chief ſcope is to magnify the one only true God. And it gives a *regular* and (whatever may be imagined by thoſe who do not or will not underſtand it) a *rational* account of divine providence; and it has beſides a ſtrong mark of a divine original, which no other book or record, ancient or modern, can pretend to. It relates things, aſcribed to the power and direction of the one only true God, to which only he, or his agents, far ſuperior to man, could be adequate; and which we have reaſon to believe, have been performed. It foretels in his name things which only he, or his ſuperior agents, could foreſee; and ſome of which they only can effect; ſeveral of which predictions have been fulfilled, aſſuring us of the fulfilment of them all. And ſome of the things done and foretold appear to be ſuch as nothing human could invent an idea of, whatever fictions may have been raiſed on their ſuggeſtion. The whole account of Scripture is conſiſtent; and all it aſcribes to God is worthy of him: its principal ſcope is to magnify his *holineſs*. This is a convincing proof of its divine authority. It repreſents God as becomes him: it repreſents God as tranſcendently *holy*; as jealous over his creatures, and watchful to note their obedience and diſobedience, in order to reward and puniſh. Under this notion, God is repreſented as puniſhing the ſin of the firſt man with depravity and death, not only in himſelf but in all his deſcendants; as deſtroying the world by a deluge; as contracting the life of man, *&c. &c. &c.* and chiefly as requiring the ſacrifice of the promiſed ſeed to atone for the ſins of mankind. All theſe

things were done, and ſtill much more (it informs us) will be done, in order to diſplay the divine *holineſs*. Let us not imagine, then, that obedience and diſobedience to the ſupreme Being are matters of little moment. Obedience is the principal end of the creation, in order to the glory of God; or is the principal means, by which his glory is to be ſerved; and, in God's conſideration, is of more value than all our lives and happineſs: this he ſeverely has made, and will make, his erring creatures to know.——See *Cicero De Legibus, Lib.* II. §. 10.

(17) Here it may be proper to anticipate ſome objections likely enough to be made. The author here ſpeaks of the attributes or qualities of God, as God himſelf muſt do, to ſpeak intelligibly to men: he muſt aſcribe to himſelf juſtice and mercy, love and anger: but hence a philoſopher is not to think, that the divine and human qualities of the ſame *name* are the ſame in *eſſence*; they are only the ſame in *end: i. e.* the human moral qualities and the divine correſpond to the ſame *ends*: which is quite as ſufficient for all purpoſes of religion and morality as if they were the ſame in *eſſence*. God muſt have made the moral qualities of his creatures correſpondent in end to his own; differ from his they muſt in eſſence, as much as the creatures' natures differ from his. This topic will be more enlarged on in its proper place.

(18) It may be proper, by a note here, to be more explicit upon this ſubject, although it is ſufficiently elucidated in the laſt book. I muſt beg the reader to obſerve, that we cannot conceive how God could form and govern a ſyſtem of probation upon other principles than thoſe which, as appears in nature and revelation, he has employed. Pleaſure muſt be uſed to try and to reward; pain, if vice ariſes, muſt be uſed (is requiſite, if not quite neceſſary) to try and puniſh. In order to trial, there muſt be a proſpect open of acquiring preſent pleaſure, or of avoiding preſent pain, by a deſertion of duty. This is neceſſary, to prove whether free creatures will adhere to duty, and love it more than preſent pleaſure, and dread the violation of it more than preſent pain. And, in order to encourage them to adhere to duty, and to deter them from violating it, there muſt be a proſpect, more or leſs open, of gaining future pleaſure and avoiding future pain, by an adherence to duty. Not that we are to love future pleaſure, or dread future pain, more than we love duty, or hate the violation of it; but this diſcipline is neceſſary to bring us (in a way of probation) to love duty for its own ſake, and to hate the violation of it as ſuch. Probation requires, as a proper means thereof, that we ſhould get *habits*, good or evil, according to our conduct: and that the effects of habit ſhould inhere, till removed gradually by conduct of a different tendency. We neither are, nor can be, required to ceaſe from loving pleaſure and hating pain; but we are, and muſt be, required to preſer the conſideration of duty to both; and to ſeek this, or ſhun that, only in the way of duty. This is evidently neceſſary for probation; which, as far as we can judge, could not be eſtabliſhed on other principles. This, I hope, may ſerve to ſatisfy thoſe who alledge, that *virtue* is nothing more than *ſeeking preſent pleaſure in the diſcreeteſt manner*: and likewiſe

thoſe, who aſſert, that *virtue is altogether mercenary in ſeeking future pleaſure.* Virtue is loving duty (or things according to duty) above every other conſideration. Obſerve, it conſiſts in loving duty, not excluſive of, but above, every other conſideration. The truth is, we muſt be diſciplined by pleaſure and pain, in order that we may learn to love and delight in duty as the baſis of our ſupreme good, and to abhor the violation of it as the greateſt evil. This is our probation, and the only probation poſſible. Sober common ſenſe tells every man this truth, howſoever viſionary philoſophy may be embarraſſed about the matter. Let it be admitted, that *probation of the creatures for the glory of God* is the chief end of the creation; it will neceſſarily follow, that God could not make and govern things on other principles than thoſe exhibited in nature and revelation. He muſt *create*, and, in caſe of a fall, muſt *curſe* and *redeem*. To exerciſe and diſplay his *natural abilities*, he muſt create; to exerciſe and diſplay his *moral as well as natural attributes*, he muſt create ſome creatures moral, and govern them after a moral manner. In caſe of a fall, he muſt *curſe*, either as he did, or in ſome way equivalent, in order to ſhew his ſeverity againſt ſin: then it becomes equally neceſſary that he ſhould *redeem*, in ſome way or other, in order to ſhew his mercy. Alſo a mediator to redeem may in ſome caſes be neceſſary in moral fitneſs, from an ocurrence in things, made poſſible to happen in ſuch a conſtitution of a ſyſtem, as God may well pleaſe to create. Such mediator may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be ordained before the world began; and to be appointed, in caſe of a fall, to become a propitiation; on the principles common to all free creatures in this ſyſtem of probation, viz. that each ſhall riſe or fall by its own merits or demerits; and that in performing theſe, one ſhall act and ſuffer for another; every one according to its rank and relations, and the ſtate of the whole. On theſe principles, it may be peculiarly fit, that the higheſt creature in the ſyſtem, he in whom it pleaſeth God all fulneſs ſhall dwell, Coloſſ. i. 19. ſhould be appointed to the taſk of propitiation; and this in God's love to him, that he may learn obedience, Heb. v. 8, and gain higher honour, Phil. ii. 9. as well as in God's love to the world, which he redeems; John iii. 16. and for the glory of God's holineſs, Rom. iii. 26.* By a *propitiation* I mean a

* It may not be improper to explain here, the ſcripture-doctrine of Chriſt's *propitiation*. The Logos, or Word, John 1. the firſt-born of the creation, Col. i. 15. did, as foretold by the prophets, [redacted] take human fleſh; and lived and died as a man, for man's redemption, Heb. ii. 14. as well as to ſerve many other grand purpoſes. To this before the world began he was ordained, in caſe of ſuch fall happening as might require it: 1 Peter, i. 20. In this ſtate he was the Meſſiah or Chriſt. He by the will of God thus taking human fleſh, and living and dying incarnate, did merit ſo far as God required, Heb. x. 10. to become a mediator and judge, either to pardon and juſtify mankind, and raiſe them from the ſtate of death to a future life of happineſs, on condition of their faith and endeavours being ſuch, as he well may expect from ſuch creatures in ſuch circumſtances: 1 John, i. 7. or elſe to raiſe them from the ſtate of death to a future ſtate of miſery (which is the ſecond death) in caſe of

ſacrifice

ſacrifice appointed by God as a ſign or pledge of his love, his propitiouſneſs and mercy, his help and ſalvation: Heb. iv. 16. a ſolemn expreſſion of love, made as expedient under certain circumſtances from a moral God to moral creatures, to aſſure them of forgiveneſs and happi-

their faithleſsneſs and demerits being ſuch, as God by his laws condemns to that lot. Chriſt, by his preaching, his miracles and prophecies, with thoſe of the prophets and apoſtles, taught and witneſſed the above doctrine, as being the great myſtery of God, and the purpoſe of his grace, concerning human redemption. By him, *who died for our ſins*, God grants us forgiveneſs of ſins, accepting his merits for our defects, on condition of our honeſt faith in God's mercy through him, and an honeſt life; or, in other words, on condition of our becoming *new creatures*, Gal. vi. 15. creatures created by the faith of Chriſt into a Chriſtian diſpoſition. And, in conſequence of forgiveneſs of ſins, he grants us deliverance from the penalty of ſin, viz. death: for he grants us reſurrection into an happy new life, through him, *who roſe again for our juſtification:* Rom. iv. 25. If he quicken our ſpirits now, through our own good endeavours, into a virtuous diſpoſition; he will, in due time, quicken new bodies, for our ſpirits to inhabit, in a happy future ſtate: Rom. viii. 11. In conſequence of Chriſt's becoming our propitiation, God hath given him power, to quicken, with God's aſſiſtance, whom he will: John v. 21. Chriſt, by paſſing through the vail, or curſe, which ſeparates us from God's preſence, or from bliſs, (as paſſed the Jewiſh High-prieſt, once a year into the Holy of Holies, with a propitiatory ſacrifice, typical of Chriſt) hath opened a way for us into the true Holy of Holies, God's preſence, or ſtate of bliſs; on condition that we properly follow him in the way, which he hath conſecrated for us through the vail or curſe; viz. *the way of his fleſh*, Heb. x. 12. *i. e.* the way of his incarnate obedience, death and reſurrection: and that we be made conformable to his image: Rom. viii. 29. Thus, as a *ſign* of God's propitiouſneſs, and as an *agent* in conveying it, Chriſt is our *propitiation:* we may ſay of him, as is ſaid of a ſacrament in the Catechiſm, He is a *means*, whereby we receive God's grace, and a *pledge* to aſſure us thereof.

Let it be ſeriouſly remarked, that *the new creature*, or new diſpoſition, is the only ſaving qualification. After all that has been ſaid of faith and works, it is certain, that no faith, which does not create a good diſpoſition, nor works, which from a good diſpoſition do not proceed, have any moral value; they are vain; they are void of true goodneſs, of true righteouſneſs and holineſs; and conſequently give no title to receive benefit from Chriſt's propitiation, no claim to ſee the Lord. Nothing conſtitutes the requiſite qualification, but *the new creature*, the Chriſtian diſpoſition in knowledge and holineſs after the image of God. It is this diſpoſition, which frees us from our moral corruptions; in conſequence of which freedom we ſhall be freed from our mortal corruptions in due time. How proper is the proceſs!

neſs; and likewiſe (in the caſe of the great consummate ſacrifice) as an *efficient means, inſtrument*, or *agent*, in conveying his propitiouſneſs to the proper objects of it. Such *ſign*, ſuch *agent* he properly ſets forth with conditions agreeable to the nature and ſtate of the moral creatures concerned; viz. the merits of the ſacrifice, and the repentance and good endeavours of thoſe to be redeemed. It is fit, that ſome ſatisfaction be made for ſin to God's offended holineſs, when he remits ſin, or does not take ſatisfaction by puniſhing the offenders.* As this cannot be done properly by thoſe

* It may be aſked, *Where is the juſtice of puniſhing the innocent for the ſins of the guilty?* I confeſs, that ſuch procedure is unjuſt, abſtractedly conſidered; and would be inexcuſable, if it was not made conducive to adequate reward. It is perfectly juſt, however, conſidered in its due connexion, with the circumſtances of a moral probationary ſyſtem, and the iſſues in retribution. Conſidered with reſpect to God and his creatures, collectively taken, it is fit, right, juſt; nor can we conceive how God could exerciſe his juſtice properly without ſuch a procedure. He muſt be juſt to himſelf in exerciſing his attributes. He muſt by ſome means ſhew to his creatures the evil of ſin, and his indignation at it, that they may learn to avoid it, and that the dignity of his holineſs may be vindicated: he could not be juſt to his own attributes, if he did not. In this view his procedure is juſt and requiſite. And as to the preſent injuſtice which ſome individuals ſuffer from it, ſuch injuſtice will be clearly done away by their advancement in merit and perfection and future reward. It is thus, and thus only, that the evils incident to a moral ſyſtem muſt be reconciled with juſtice. It ſeems impoſſible for the wiſdom and juſtice and holineſs of God, to diſplay and to vindicate themſelves in any other manner than this now alledged. In the whole of God's counſels taken together, his procedure in this caſe is perfectly right, fit and juſt; and perhaps ſo much ſo, that ſcarcely any other would be equally juſt: God could ſcarcely otherwiſe be juſt, either to himſelf or to his creatures.

To explain this point, as far as we are able, may be of great utility towards giving ſatisfaction to the human mind, and inducing it to pay a cordial reverence to its author. Yet, if ſuch explanation was omitted, the merely knowing that we are in this evil ſtate, and have means afforded us of getting out of it, ſhould be ſufficient to make us employ thoſe means: it would be highly rational to uſe the means of eſcaping evil, though we could not ſee the juſtice of the diſpenſation which brought us into it. If a man, while aſleep, is put into a ſinking veſſel, it is in vain for him, when he wakes amidſt dangers, to ſtay to enquire whether he was juſtly placed there: his buſineſs is to uſe the means which he finds preſented for his preſervation. If he has reaſon, nay likewiſe revealed aſſurance, to induce him to embrace the means which offer for his ſafety, he muſt be a fool (to ſay the leaſt) if he rejects them. But in the caſe, which we are now conſidering, (namely, that of our ſituation and that of Chriſt) the juſtice

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to be redeemed, it is to be done by the great agent of redemption, one, who by his native rank and ſteady uprightneſs is qualified for the requiſite humiliation and obedience, and fit for the office and honour to enſue; namely, to be head over all claſſes of creatures in this ſyſtem, angelic as well as human; for angels are intereſted in this tranſaction, as well as men and ranks inferior; it concerns the whole ſyſtem. Eph. i. 20. &c. It may be ſaid, God could appoint any creature to be redeemer, and head over all things. I grant it: he might appoint a mere man or a mere worm, and inveſt the ſame with competent powers to be redeemer, and head over all things: but this cannot be thought to be quite fit, unleſs we ſuppoſe the creature who held originally the higheſt rank, and alſo all thoſe of all intermediate ranks, to have forfeited their condition. Would it be fit, unleſs in con-

of bringing into evil is perfectly reconcileable to our reaſon (if we reaſon fairly); and the means of our deliverance are moſt rational and certain. Chriſt's ſufferings (or thoſe of any other innocent being) are no injuſtice, but ſuch as is proper to be admitted in caſe of ſin in others, for the very exerciſe of juſtice. It is certain, that juſtice cannot be exerciſed without trial of the creatures; and trial, if ſin happens, muſt expoſe the innocent to ſuffer by, and for, the guilty; in order that the operations of juſtice may take place in reward. It is, and muſt be, reward, and reward only, which diſtinguiſhes juſtice. The permiſſion and ordination of evil and injuſtice for a time thus are neceſſary for the exerciſe of juſtice. And for ſo long a time muſt ſuch ſtate of things take place, as is requiſite for agents, good and bad, to have ſufficient trial. This is a conſequence both of God's juſtice and goodneſs. The ſufferings of Chriſt, though he was innocent, were proper to prove that God is juſt, and to vindicate his divine holineſs. If we do not clearly apprehend this now, we ſhall by and by, when we come to have a right underſtanding of the divine counſels.

It may be ſaid, that God might have exerciſed his goodneſs, without making room for the exerciſe of his juſtice; or he might have made the creatures happy, without giving them what is requiſite to the exerciſe of juſtice, a peccable freedom; and ſo he might have prevented all the evils of injuſtice and puniſhment, with which his creation is now afflicted. I grant it. But without exerciſing his juſtice, he could not have exerciſed his goodneſs in a manner ſo becoming himſelf, or ſo extenſively beneficial to his creatures; becauſe without giving peccable freedom, he could not exerciſe his attributes, juſtice and mercy, in diſpenſing rewards and puniſhments; nor give his creatures thoſe honourable faculties, in which ſuch freedom is founded and employed; nor one tittle of that, the higheſt kind of happineſs, which conſiſts in a conſciouſneſs of free-agency, moral worth, and merited reward. For the ſake of greater good, he admitted a poſſibility of evil originally, and the reality of it afterwards; but both in ſuch a way, as to promote the greateſt good, his glory; and likewiſe the greateſt good of thoſe his creatures, who endeavour well to merit his beatific remuneration. This, I think, is anſwering the higheſt and beſt purpoſe, of which a creation can be capable.

ſequence

ſequence of forfeiture, that another ſhould be exalted above him, who was originally the higheſt? I do not ſay but that there may be reaſons of fitneſs with God for appointing ſuch an exaltation; but, as far as appears to us, reaſon is againſt it, and fact likewiſe. If the originally chief creature continues in worth equal to his rank, he retains a claim above all others to have the firſt offices and the chief reward; as by his native dignity he is the fitteſt for them. Who ſo fit to be God's principal inſtrument of redemption, as he who was God's principal inſtrument of creation? The higheſt creature in this ſyſtem is he, to whom the office of redemption is aſcribed in revelation and he ſeems, on the beſt reaſons apparent to us, to be the fitteſt perſon to bear that office. He is the fitteſt, not only on his own account, to ſecure to himſelf the higheſt honours, but alſo becauſe he was the ableſt and the moſt bounden to do the higheſt honours to God, and the greateſt benefits to his inferiors. Such was his innocence, ſuch were his merits in this merciful tranſaction, God is pleaſed to accept them, as a ſatisfaction for the ſins of the fallen; provided the fallen do as well as they can do, in the way of faith, repentance, and reformation. This is a reward to him, as well as a grace to them. And in ſome manner, as in this caſe, God often benefits, as well as diſtreſſes, many for the ſake of one. The ordination of God in Chriſt may be requiſite, to anſwer abundance of valuable purpoſes; and it evidently does. It ſets an high example of obedience to men and angels; it ſhews the nature of God's holineſs, ſevere in puniſhing, and rich in rewarding, that all, acquainted with it, may duly reverence his holineſs; and it aſſures the truly penitent of pardon and happineſs. *He that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. *He hath raiſed him from the dead, and given him glory, that our faith and hope may be in God,* 1 Peter, i. 21. On the whole, it ſeems to us, that to ſerve the end of probation, God ſcarcely could have done otherwiſe than he has done; at leaſt, not more wiſely; and that he could not act on other principles, to manifeſt all his attributes in ſo ample a manner. His holineſs is the chief of his atrributes; that which moſt properly denominates him *God*, or ſovereign Governor of the univerſe: it is the centre and ſtandard of his attributes, the perfection of his perfection: therefore it was peculiarly expedient that he ſhould manifeſt his holineſs, which accordingly he has done. And farther obſerve, while he manifeſts his attributes in the beſt manner, he alſo conſequently beſtows on his creatures the beſt faculties and higheſt dignities: *their* glory and *his* muſt riſe together. This ought to ſtop all petulant murmurs, as if he had ſacrificed the creature's good to his own honour. The grand purpoſe of endowing the creatures with noble faculties, and of manifeſting his own attributes, obliged him to create them on theſe principles, and no other; and the proſecution of his purpoſe, in exalting their dignity and his own glory, obliges him to govern them on theſe principles, and no other. None other could conſiſt with their and his nature. This, when rightly underſtood, (as I hope my efforts in this work will contribute to make it,) will prove the ſcheme

of

of holy ſcripture to be perfectly rational; and not only rational, but, in its leading principles, neceſſary, entirely neceſſary, to that, which we muſt conceive as the beſt poſſible ultimate end of a creation; that is, firſt, the honour of it, and, laſtly, the glory of God.

There are people of a certain turn, advocates for *free grace*, who will be ready to quarrel with me for aſſerting that *God muſt redeem:* they will urge St. Paul againſt me—*By grace ye are ſaved through faith, and that ſalvation is not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God.* But they miſtake both me and the apoſtle. The apoſtle, who manifeſts in all his epiſtles a deep anxiety to combat the errors of the time, eſpecially to prove that the law (of nature and Moſes) was inſufficient alone (without grace, which through faith in Chriſt makes up for our deficiencies in obeying it) to ſecure ſalvation.—The apoſtle, I ſay, in this and other ſuch texts, only means to aſſert the inſufficiency of the law, and the expediency of grace through faith in Chriſt: he means, that man's obedience to the law muſt be imperfect; and therefore nothing could be claimed on that obedience without faith in Chriſt joined with it: faith in Chriſt was neceſſary as a remedy to our weakneſs in obedience, ſeeing that God, in his mercy to our infirmities and miſeries, had ſet forth Chriſt to be our propitiation, or to take off the curſe impoſed for ſin. Certainly the apoſtle's argument is right—*Not for works of righteouſneſs that we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaves us.* Nevertheleſs, I preſume that my argument is equally right too: his and mine do not interfere, but perfectly agree. I affirm, with the apoſtle, that *for our works of righteouſneſs* God is not obliged to redeem; our obedience cannot reach the ſtandard of the perfect law of original nature, and therefore we cannot claim perfection by that law; but, for *the innocence of ſome*, and to *manifeſt his own mercy*, he is obliged: on theſe accounts he is inviolably bounden to accommodate matters by another law, a law of grace. This, I think, is plain beyond a doubt: if a creature is made miſerable without its own fault, and never offends, God is bound in equity, is bound by his rectitude, to redeem or relieve that creature: whether it did any good works or not we do not enquire; works are out of the queſtion. Again, if a creature falls into miſery by his own fault, and offends no more, or not much, I can eaſily conceive that equity may require ſuch a creature to be redeemed. However, this is certain, that, to ſhew his mercy, God *muſt*, poſitively *muſt*, redeem many ſinful creatures: mercy can be ſhewn only in pardoning offenders. St. Paul would not deny this. He only denies the ſufficiency of works in the law without faith in Chriſt, (as his adverſaries obliged him to do with the greateſt vehemence). I deny the ſame: but I aſſert, that God muſt be obliged, by equity and rectitude, to redeem the innocent, though their works may give them no claim to any thing; and he muſt be obliged alſo to redeem ſome that are wicked, for diſplaying his mercy and glory. The ſame, I am ſure, St. Paul would have aſſerted, had he met with the ſame occaſion. *By our works then God is not obliged to redeem.* This is St. Paul's argument. But *by his rectitude in reſpect to the innocent, and for the purpoſe of diſplaying his mercy, he is obliged.* This is my argument. The apoſtle and I have no difference; I hope we and our friends

friends ſhall have none. Man's *works* oblige not God: but God's own *equity* and *mercy* do.

19) Underſtand only, that the ſinner withdraws his praiſe from God; and thereby, as far as in him lies, detracts from God's glory: but not that God's glory is thereby diminiſhed: his glory being the chief end, nothing which happens can defeat, but muſt advance it. Accordingly, it is evident, as I obſerve below, that God's glory is advanced by the fall: not but that it might have been equally advanced, and certainly would, if the fall had never happened: it would have been equally advanced by ſome other way: but, however, it was advanced by the fall; and as much by that as it would have been otherwiſe. Let the creatures fall or ſtand, the glory of God is equally ſerved. But not ſo is the rectitude and happineſs of the creation; for ſo much ſin is ſo much loſs of rectitude to the creation; ſo much pain is ſo much loſs of happineſs, whether it be loſt only for a while or for ever. The righteous who ſuffer undeſervedly, and the guilty who repent, may indeed be rewarded, at the laſt, with higher happineſs than would have fallen to their lot, had they never ſuffered nor been guilty; but then the ſhare of happineſs, which the damned loſe, will be loſt for ever, and the pain they ſuffer will be for ever eſtabliſhed.

(20) This is all that the Phariſees meant by *fate*. Yet, from the ambiguity of a place in Joſephus, ſome writers of great name (entertaining in themſelves miſtaken notions about fate) have aſſerted far otherwiſe. The words of Joſephus are, δοκησαν τω θεω κρασιν γενεσθαι, το των εκεινης (*i. e.* εἱμαρμενης) βουλευματος το των ανθρωπων, τω θελησαντι (*i. e.* θεω, as I think) προσχωρειν μετ' αρετης, κακιας: That is, as I underſtand it, *they* (the phariſees) *thought that God had made a mixture* (or contemparament) *of the counſel of fate and of men: it being his deſign to give place for virtue and evil*; (*i. e.* to conſtitute things ſo, that virtue might exiſt, and evil be poſſible, by falling into vice and pain. This muſt be the meaning; for the will of men could not be neceſſary to evil; unleſs on the condition that evil ſhould exiſt by will's abuſe. Nor does fate neceſſarily imply evil, that evil ſhould exiſt by fate, except on the ſame condition. The meaning muſt be, that fate and will were ſo conſtituted, that virtue ſhould exiſt and be exerciſed; and that evil ſhould be produced, if will offends. Joſephus ſays (chap. iii. *of the wars of the Jews*), *The phariſees ſay, that all things are not the work of God:* certainly they meant ſome effects are produced by created agents, which effects were not intended to exiſt, without their agency: one of thoſe effects is evil: Matt. xiii. 27. 28. Joſephus ſays, chap. xii. *They attribute all things to fate and God:* I underſtand, *to the ſettled order which God hath appointed, and to God's over-ruling and interpoſing therein.* This muſt be his meaning, if conſiſtent with himſelf; for, in the firſt-cited place, he ſuppoſes fate to be nothing but the reſult of God's will.) *And*, continues he, *the power of doing right or wrong, they ſuppoſe, lies much in men: yet that the aid of fate concurs in every thing.* This is true philoſophy. Such a mixture of neceſſity

neceſſity and liberty, as the phariſees ſeem to have ſuppoſed, is and muſt be appointed, in order to the trial of will. And, from the mixture, God may cauſe evil to reſult or not reſult, as he pleaſes to give natures to fate and will, which are entirely his creatures. It is not likely he ſhould cauſe evil to reſult, except from abuſe of will, in ſin, and its conſequences. *Triſmegiſtus* in *Pimand*, c. 12, § 5. *Pindar Olymp.* 2. and *Seneca de Providentia*, c. 5. if they be conſiſtent with themſelves, can mean no more; for they all ſuppoſe free-will as well as fate.

It appears that, by ειμαρμενη, the Greeks uſually underſtood nothing more than the *common courſe of nature*, which they ſuppoſed (as all men inſtinctively and neceſſarily do) ſubject in a due degree to be varied by free agents, acting either by chance or deſign. Thus Demoſthenes, *De Corona*, magnifying the generoſity of the Athenians, affirms, *That they did not eſteem themſelves to be born only for father and mother, but for their country.* Then he aſks, what is the difference between theſe two ſentiments; and replies, οτι ο μεν τοις γονευσι μονον γεγενησθαι νομιζων, τον της ειμαρμμενης και τον αυτοματον θανατον περιμενει ὁ δε και τη πατριδι, υπερ τȣ μη ταυτην επιδειν δȣλευȣσαν. αποθνησκειν εθελησει: that is, *He, who thinks himſelf born only for his parents, waits for the death by fate, or for an accidental death; but he, who thinks himſelf born for his country, will rather die voluntarily than ſee it enſlaved.* Here it is plain, that he ſuppoſes, either chance or choice may anticipate the death by fate: therefore he can mean nothing by *fate*, but the courſe of nature, which of itſelf brings on death in due ſeaſon; and with which either chance or deſign may interfere, to bring on death ſooner. See *Virgil, Æneid* IV. 696. and X. 467; and *Homer, Iliad* IX. 415.

It ſeems ſtrange, that all philoſophers do not perceive that there muſt be a mixture of neceſſity and liberty; and that the general conſtitution and order of the creation muſt be as they are, for the purpoſe of trial, and for the diſplay of the attributes of God. Neceſſity is, in ſome reſpects, eſſential to every being and every ſyſtem; and is eſpecially ſo to a moral ſyſtem: for liberty, if not joined with neceſſity, could have no uſe: there could be no objects to act upon, nor rules to act by: for paſſivity, union, and rules of action, do ſuppoſe neceſſity. Some talk as if they thought that liberty ſhould be ſo boundleſs as to admit no neceſſity; others perceive ſo much neceſſity in things, that they aſſert there is no liberty: both ſorts offend againſt common ſenſe and experience. I hope it will be underſtood, from the premiſed conſiderations, that there is, and muſt be, if morality is admitted, a mixture of neceſſity and liberty in every ſyſtem of God's forming; for the one without the other would not anſwer that end.

(21) Some philoſophers think, that created nature is ſo entirely linked to God, that every motion proceeds from him alone; others ſuppoſe it ſo detached from him, that all things act ſolely of themſelves, by virtue of powers which he originally gave them: they affirm, that created nature will not admit of God's interpoſition; that its laws are immutable. Both parties think their own notion the moſt worthy of God; but both are plainly miſtaken. Every ſyſtem, made by a moral God, will proba-

bly be a moral ſyſtem; ſuch ſort of ſyſtem being the moſt ſuitable to his nature, and conſequently the moſt ſuitable to what we may judge to be his deſign and ultimate end in creating; of courſe, it muſt be repleniſhed with free-agent beings; it muſt be eſtabliſhed on ſtated mechanic and moral laws, yet ſubject to certain changes, both from the agence of the creatures and from the Creator's own interpoſition. This muſt be the caſe, unleſs we will ſuppoſe the ſyſtem inadequate to the nobleſt uſe, *i. e.* to try, reward, and puniſh, moral beings; for which it muſt be altered ſuitably to their morals: and unleſs we ſuppoſe God negligent of diſplaying his nobleſt attributes, his moral attributes, his holineſs, which can be diſplayed only in the creation and government of a moral ſyſtem. What we call *the laws of nature*, or the ſtated courſe of things, are chiefly intended for trial; are fitneſſes, to which the courſe of things is uſually kept, that rational creatures may know them as permanent rules to reaſon and act by: if theſe laws be ſufficiently permanent for that purpoſe, their permanency is as much as is requiſite; though it be not entirely conſtant. God, or other inviſible agents, by his appointment, may interpoſe with ſpecial acts, to vary the courſe of things, either agreeably to the ſtated laws, as men do in the ſeveral applications of their power in acting by thoſe laws; or elſe they may, at leaſt God may, ſet thoſe laws entirely aſide, and act among his works by other fitneſſes; as a muſician turns his notes to another tune. God may interpoſe in either manner, and either ſecretly or openly; and in ſo doing not violate the intention of permanent laws; *i. e.* not fruſtrate the reaſoning of his creatures, nor infringe their moral capacity; but rather aſſiſt and rectify their reaſoning, and reward or puniſh their morals: Wiſd. Sol. 11. When God, or his inviſible agents, produce uncommon effects, which we call preternatural, or ſupernatural, they are to us *miracles*. Such effects may be produced either agreeably to the permanent laws of nature; as are the effects of a ſecret mine, or of electricity, done by men; and then they are not ſupernatural, but only uncommon, and in that ſenſe may be called preternatural; or they may be produced contrary to the permanent laws of nature; then are they truly ſupernatural, and miracles of high degree. Miracles can be expected only on extraordinary occaſions, for the purpoſe of very important teſtimony; if they were too frequent, they would embarraſs our reaſoning, founded on the permanency of nature's courſe. The uſual ſtate and courſe of things hath been, and may be, greatly altered without producing much, if any, embarraſſment to creatures in reaſoning or acting. The ſame wiſdom, which appointed the nature and the courſe of things, hath, in altering them, taken care that none of the good intentions, requiring in them degrees of permanency, ſhould be loſt, but rather promoted. Such is the caſe in all ſpecial acts of Providence, whether ſecret or open; the interpoſition does not unſettle things ſo, as to defraud the creatures of the proper uſe of reaſon, reſpecting nature's courſe. Created agents, ſuperior to man, may have the power of producing, according to the conſtitution and laws of nature, many effects known to men, in which men have no ſuſpicion of their agency. The generality of thoſe effects may be common; but by extraordinary exertion and art they may be able to

produce

produce ſome that are uncommon: for we may juſtly ſuppoſe their agency to bear ſome analogy to that of men. It is alſo probable, that men can produce effects, of which thoſe ſuperior beings are incapable; as an ant or a bee can perform what is not practicable by men. We may likewiſe juſtly ſuppoſe that ſuperior beings are for various reaſons capable of doing in one age, or in certain circumſtances, what they are not capable of in another age, and in other circumſtances; as is the caſe with men. But this is not the caſe with the power of God, which is ſo tranſcendent, it is competent to every effect (natural or ſupernatural, with reſpect to created natures) at all times alike; no laws, reſpecting his creatures, controul him, except thoſe by which his rectitude is pleaſed to be guided. The notion moſt worthy of God and his works is, that he made free beings, ſubject to certain fixed laws, for the ſake of trial; but that he ſuperintends every moment, interpoſes to ſuſpend, change, and controul, according to the laws of his rectitude and wiſdom; and that every thing exiſting is more ſubject to his will, than a finger or eye-lid is to ours. Not only nothing *can* happen but what he foreſaw poſſible to happen, but alſo nothing *ſhall* happen but what he will of choice permit. Not a hair ſhall fall from your head, nor a ſparrow to the ground, Matt. x. without his conſciouſneſs and permiſſion. But it is plain he will permit to happen, by the fault of his creatures, many things which ought not to happen: that is, he will permit, by his natural laws, many things forbidden by his moral laws; even things repugnant to that order, which he hath eſtabliſhed as the baſis of perfection and happineſs, and as the rule of moral action. All this is requiſite in a moral ſyſtem for probation; a ſyſtem which is the moſt worthy of a moral God, a God who alone deſerves to be called God. In brief, ſo fixed muſt things be as to anſwer the purpoſes of trial; and likewiſe ſo mutable as to anſwer the ſame end: ſo diſpoſed muſt be the whole, as ſtill more and more to manifeſt the ſame divine attributes, by carrying things on through ſucceſſive ſeaſons and changes, adapted to the morals of the creatures; and, finally, to ſhew, moſt truly and ſublimely, that God is *wiſe in all his ways, and holy in all his works*. This is the ſublime ſcripture-plan! A plan that defies all rational objection! A plan beyond all compariſon wiſe and good!

The ſyſtemation of things, the permanent laws and proceſſes ſo wonderfully eſtabliſhed among them, are evidently intended for the ſake of the reaſoning and acting of free creatures, for trial, as the principal end, next to the glory of God. God could give happineſs without ſyſtemation; could produce natural effects without permanent laws and proceſſes; could make a foreſt ſpring in an inſtant as well as in an age; could produce animals without geſtation; could feed them without their care or labour; or cauſe them to live without food; but he hath ordained otherwiſe; hath given them permanent laws and proceſſes, that they may be employed according to their powers; that they may have laws to act by, and means to uſe; and hath appointed ſuitable ends to be performed, and needs to be ſupplied, that they may have work for the exertion of their faculties. We ſee in what manner viſible beings are appointed to act by the laws and means, and to proſecute the ends adapted for their ſeveral exertions:

and it is not unreaſonable to conclude, that there are inviſible beings under ſimilar appointments. From ſeeing the vaſt extent and variety of living creatures beneath us, it is reaſonable to believe that there is a vaſt extent and variety of living creatures inviſible, about us and above us; and that the God, who made us with the faculties, which we have, did make others with faculties far ſuperior; and that all have their offices according to their faculties. If the ſun and moon, and perhaps the other planets, with the fixed ſtars, are made to contribute to the production and diſſolution of earthly plants and animals, why may not alſo ſpiritual beings inviſible be employed in the ſame proceſſes, as men are in tilling the earth, &c. We ſee that great, if not the greateſt, part of vegetable and animal productions turn out abortive, or come not to maturity: this may be much owing to the management of created beings above us, to whom God hath entruſted ſeveral operations. Nor muſt we ſuppoſe that the very abortions are uſeleſs: they conduce to ſeveral good purpoſes, particularly to the trial of ſome kinds of ſpirits. The conſtituent parts of things abortive are not loſt; the inanimate parts go to the food or formation of other organizations; and the animal parts may be transferred to give life to ſome other frame, of ſome kind or other. In all theſe proceſſes, numbers of ſpirits may find their reſpective exerciſes and trials. Probation rather than happineſs, or any other end, ſeems to be in this ſyſtem the principal end of all, in ſubſervience to the glory of God.

(22) Here it may be proper to ſet in one view ſome diſtinctions, which perhaps are not ſo conſpicuous in the poetry as their importance deſerves. We may diſtinguiſh the *chief end* into *general* and *particular*. The *general chief end of nature* is the *glory of God*. Subſervient to this, every ſpecies muſt have a *particular chief end*, peculiar to itſelf. Man, for inſtance, is made for probation, for the glory of God: *probation* is man's particular chief end. Whether he obeys his duty, or diſobeys, he equally ſerves the end, probation, and the glory of God. But ſince by obedience only he ſerves the glory of God as he ought (agreeable to his duty) and retains his own perfection and title to happineſs (diſobedience being the forfeiture of theſe), we may reckon, if we reſpect his duty and his perfection, as well as the glory of God, that *obedience* is the particular chief end of man. To theſe we may add another diſtinction, no leſs important: the *chief end* and the *chief good* are to be diſtinguiſhed. Conſidered with reſpect to man (and indeed to the whole free creation) they are very different things: and the diſtinction ought to be clearly underſtood; for through the want of ſuch diſtinctions has been cauſed that perplexity, obſervable in men's reaſonings about the *chief end* and the *chief good*. We have already defined the *chief end* to be *probation for the glory of God*: we define the *chief good* to be *perfection crowned with happineſs*. Manifeſtly, the *chief good* is, and muſt be, the reward of obediently purſuing the *chief end*. Conſidering the *chief end* and the *chief good* with reſpect to God, *his glory or the diſplay of his attributes by the laws of holineſs* is his chief end; his chief good is *his complacency therein*; or his chief end and chief good are one, *his pleaſure in exerciſing his attributes by the laws of rectitude*.

(23) Many

(23) Many affect to maintain, that happineſs is (or however ought to be) the ultimate end: but all nature, within our knowledge, oppoſes this notion: and ſurely ſo does reaſon too; as, I think, I have proved. The glory of God is the ultimate end. And there is an end, ſubſervient to that, which is ſuperior to happineſs; which end is the dignity and perfection of the ſyſtem. Nay, conſequently, the dignity and perfection of each individual is an end ſuperior to happineſs. Indeed happineſs is a concomitant, a coronary part of general perfection: but it (and perfection in general) is fitly made to depend on probation. Take a ſhort ſtate of the caſe. Fitneſs, it muſt be obſerved, is the rule of God: and it ſeems ſupereminently fit, that He, in forming his creation, ſhould make it competent to diſplay all his attributes. In conſequence he muſt, in the firſt ſtages of it, appoint probation to be its chief end, next to his own glory; becauſe that is an end, chiefly requiſite for his glory; for, without probation, his moral attributes, juſtice and mercy, could not be diſplayed. And we add, without probation, the creation could not require nor receive ſuch dignity of powers, as it muſt neceſſarily have with it. Since then probation is the chief ſubſervient end, or is chiefly requiſite for the glory of God, it neceſſarily follows, that pleaſure and pain, or happineſs and miſery, muſt depend on probation; and reſpectively muſt attach to obedience and diſobedience; muſt attach firſt in probation, according to the laws of probation; and laſtly in retribution, according to the laws of retribution, *i. e.* according to ſtrict juſtice, or conformably to the preciſe claims of individual merit and demerit. This ſeems to be clearly rational; and ſeems to be the real caſe of the creation. Therefore happineſs is not to be accounted the ultimate end, nor the ſecond end, of the creation; but is properly the claim of obedience. And ſo we naturally conſider it: every man, in paſſing through this ſtate of imperfection and difficulty, naturally expects happineſs, as a reward for proſecuting his own perfection and that of the ſyſtem, for the glory of God. This expectation is a great ſupport to virtue in arduous caſes; for though the perfection of the ſyſtem, or the general good, be amiable in itſelf, abſtracted from this expectation of individuals; and has a right to be preferred to their private advantages for its own excellence; yet it would be very hard for individuals to purſue it through dangers and ſufferings without expecting happineſs to reward the purſuit. However, happineſs is to be conſidered only as an adjunct to this end: and, indeed, ſo does every man, as it were, in ſpite of himſelf, conſider it: for, when he purſues happineſs in violation of this end, he expects and dreads puniſhment; but, when he purſues this end through inconveniences and dangers, he expects final happineſs as his reward. And in both caſes his expectation cannot fail him, becauſe it is ſolidly founded on the juſtice of God and the nature of things.

(24) Several heathen writers maintain or allow the promiſcuous diſtribution of good and evil to be an objection againſt a divine providence.

— Sunt

——— Sunt nobis nulla profecto
Numina, cum cæco rapiantur ſingula caſu:
Mentimur regnare Jovem. *Lucan, lib.* 7.

Res humanas ordine nullo
Fortuna regit, ſpargitque manu
Munera cæcâ, pejora fovens, &c. *Senec. Hippol.* Act III.

But, if we reaſon rightly, this promiſcuous diſtribution is rather an argument *for* a divine providence: upon any other ſuppoſition, it muſt appear to be more unaccountable and prepoſterous. If we aſſume any atheiſtical ſcheme, and ſuppoſe the world to be the effect of ſelf-exiſtent principles, acting ſolely among themſelves by either chance, fate, or deſign, we muſt, on any of theſe three ſuppoſitions, find it very hard to account for that phenomenon: for, on any of the three, it ſhould ſeem that things could not be as they are. As the principles are ſuppoſed to act ſolely of themſelves, it ſhould ſeem, that, whenever they ſhould concur to form an excellence of one ſort, they would equally form an excellence of every other, moral and natural, perſonal and circumſtantial: and, on the contrary, that, wherever they ſhould leave a defect of one ſort, they would equally leave a defect of every other: and ſo good and evil would be leſs mixed than they are. But, be this as it may, ſuppoſing a divine providence, it is rational to think that things ſhould be as they are; *viz.* that moral and natural good ſhould not always aſſociate; neither moral and natural evil: but that room ſhould be left for their diſunion, in order to the better probation of free creatures; and that virtue and vice may be more eminently rewarded or puniſhed in a future ſtate; a ſtate which the promiſcuous diſtribution of good and evil, under a divine providence, in this life, inconteſtably implies. We ought not to think the inequalities in the fortunes of men any more than in their morals, to be abſolutely predeſtinated: the notion is repugnant to reaſon and the nature of things: it takes away free agency from us, in regard to making our worldly condition better or worſe; it is inconſiſtent with ſcripture-hiſtory. The different fortunes of men are, in general, *permitted*, and not particularly *ordained*. It is indeed certain, that the Almighty overſees, controuls, and interpoſes, at his pleaſure; and brings to paſs, by his ſpecial direction, many events, ſeemingly caſual or moral: but ſtill it is alſo as certain, that he leaves men and other moral beings to their own management; even ſo far as the faculties he has given them and the trial he intends them do require. Hence it follows, that the different conditions of men are properly to be aſcribed to men and to other moral agents, in many reſpects, rather than to God. When God interpoſes, ſcripture hiſtory ſhews, that he treats men as moral beings under trial; and adapts his interpoſitions with a degree of compliance to the cuſtoms and manners of their own making, generally and individually; and is far from excluding every impropriety.

END OF THE NOTES TO BOOK I.

APPENDIX.

OF FITNESS.

FITNESS is a ſubject deſerving minute conſideration: it is the baſis of the laws of God and his creatures, and of all reaſoning.

Between all things, exiſting or poſſible, there muſt be relations. The word *things* here is to be taken the moſt comprehenſively, to ſignify all entities and nonentities, deſigns, actions, paſſions, ends; all whatever is, or is poſſible. Relations there muſt be between all thoſe things; and the modes of the relations will conſiſt of *fit* or right, of *unfit* or wrong, and of *indifferent*. This will be plain by exemplification. Let it be required to make a ſolid to fill a portion of ſpace of ſix cubic inches, without aſſigning any particular figure. It is plain, that, by the ſuppoſition, as the figure of the ſolid is left undetermined, the figure of it is a mode of relation *indifferent* to the end: but the ſize is neceſſarily to be juſt ſix cubic inches; therefore the ſize of ſix cubic inches is a mode of relation neceſſarily *fit* to the end, is right, true, juſt; and for the ſize to be more or leſs is neceſſarily a mode of relation *unfit* to the end, is wrong, falſe, unjuſt. The fit modes of relation are adjuſted by fit rules, which are called *Laws of fitneſs*. Theſe laws of fitneſs (and conſequently their contraries, the modes of unfitneſs) are, and are as they are, by neceſſity: we cannot imagine either their nonexiſtence, or their being otherwiſe: we perceive they are independent of every will and power whatſoever; they can neither be made, nor unmade, nor altered. The neceſſity of them is the ſame, previous to the exiſtence of the object they relate to, as after it. They are previouſly neceſſary to its nature, that, if ever it do exiſt, and exiſt fitly, it muſt exiſt according to the reſpective laws of fitneſs. Aſſerting this is nothing more than ſaying, that it muſt be what it ſhould be; or that, if it do exiſt at all, it muſt, if fit, exiſt with its eſſential conditions: what thoſe are, its reſpective laws or modes of fitneſs determine. The neceſſity of the fitneſs is independent of the exiſtence of the thing, of which the fitneſs is predicated. Of this every mind muſt be ſenſible, that can and will apply to think on the ſubject. We no ſooner form any idea of a thing, than we neceſſarily perceive, as clearly as we perceive the thing itſelf, that it has certain relations belonging to it; certain conditions of fitneſs and unfitneſs reſulting from it. Theſe, we perceive, are neceſſary reſults, are inſeparable from the nature of the thing, are eſſential to it in the poſſibility of it, though it never do exiſt. They had a neceſſity

ceſſity of reſulting as they do, and of being juſt what they are, before the thing, which they relate to, exiſted, and before any idea of it exiſted. All relations of figure, number, power, and all relations whatſoever, muſt, to be fit, exiſt according to laws of fitneſs, which exiſt *of* neceſſity previous to them; and which neceſſarily come into force and obligation, if the thing to which they apply, do exiſt. I repeat, that the laws of fitneſs, by which any relations muſt be modified to be fit, exiſt *of* neceſſity eternally; and neceſſarily reſult into force or obligation with the exiſtence of the thing, to which they appertain; inſomuch that the thing muſt exiſt according to thoſe neceſſary laws of fitneſs, or not exiſt at all, unleſs it exiſt unfit.

All that I have been ſaying is obvious in mathematical relations; and, I think, not much leſs ſo in other caſes. That two and two ſhall make four; that three lines aptly diſpoſed ſhould make a triangle, have evidently a fitneſs ~~founded in~~ that neceſſity, which I have been ſpeaking of. There is a neceſſity for two and two to make four, and for three lines aptly diſpoſed to make a triangle, independent of any will and power whatſoever; the contrary cannot be imagined: and the neceſſity would be the ſame whether any numbers exiſted or not, and whether any lines exiſted or not. There is a previous neceſſity, that if ever ſuch numbers exiſt, two and two ſhall be equal to four; and that three lines, if ever three lines exiſt, aptly diſpoſed, ſhall make a triangle. This neceſſity depends not on will and power; no will and power can make theſe relations to be otherwiſe. The ſame is the caſe in all relations, in all laws of fitneſs, natural and moral. There is a neceſſity, that a law of fitneſs be what it is. The law ever exiſts *of* neceſſity, though the thing, it relates to, exiſt not. If the thing come into exiſtence, it muſt, to be fit, exiſt according to the law; no will nor power can poſſibly determine otherwiſe. The neceſſity of fitneſs would be the ſame, whether its object exiſt or not; and whether any will and power, to create the object, exiſt or not. I ſhall add one inſtance in naturals, and another in morals. It is fit, that a ſun, intended to illuminate the ſolar ſyſtem, ſhould poſſeſs a power equal to that purpoſe. In this fitneſs there is an abſolute neceſſity, a neceſſity independent of the divine will. The neceſſity of fitneſs would be the ſame, whether any ſun, or any ſolar ſyſtem, or any Deity exiſt or not. It is fit that a creature, endued with faculties ſuch that by a free uſe of them it can know and acknowledge the greatneſs and goodneſs of the Creator, ſhould uſe its faculties to know and acknowledge them. In this there is an eternal fitneſs, independent of any will and power: it is fit independent of any making; and cannot be made otherwiſe. The fitneſs in the law is the ſame, whether any creature or Creator exiſt or not. It is impoſſible for man, or any being whatſoever, who rightly underſtands the propoſition, to think or imagine the contrary.

The word *truth* being uſed to ſignify the laws of fitneſs, this neceſſity in them is ſometimes called *The immutability of truth*.

From the premiſſes it is evident, that God in his operation does not (properly ſpeaking) *make* laws *for* his works, but *ſelect* the laws, and make his works *to* them. He is free to chooſe the work, the end; but having choſen that,

that, he muſt neceſſarily purſue the laws of fitneſs unalterably neceſſary to that end; otherwiſe the end he cannot attain at all. To be able to do otherwiſe would be to be able to do a contradiction—*to make a thing be and not be at the ſame time*; which confeſſedly is to all power an impoſſibility. The utmoſt any wiſdom, will and power can do, is to chooſe the end, and then follow the laws of fitneſs, which previouſly were neceſſary to the end. No wiſdom, will and power, can make or unmake the laws themſelves.

The means to any poſſible end, the relations of any poſſible object, have a neceſſity of being what they are; and the fitneſſes and unfitneſſes, contained in thoſe relations, have a neceſſity of being what they are; inſomuch, that no wiſdom, will, and power, can make them be otherwiſe; nor can there be imagined a poſſibility of their being altered in their nature.

But ſince ends, poſſible to be choſen by God, are almoſt, if not quite, infinite; and ſince, in many caſes, different laws of fitneſs may be competent to one and the ſame end; it follows, God may ſelect any laws of fitneſs he pleaſes, to form his works upon: the latitude of choice in ſome reſpects is almoſt, or quite unlimited. In order to any one end he may chooſe different laws: he may chooſe any laws, which anſwer to it. And plainly, as he can make the natures of his creatures to any laws he pleaſes, ſo can he alter their natures as often as he pleaſes, and in what manner he pleaſes, by quitting the firſt laws of fitneſs, and adapting the natures of his creatures to new.

From the neceſſity in the laws of fitneſs it follows, that, if the natures and ſituations of the things they pertain to, be changed, the laws too muſt be changed; or rather *exchanged*; *i. e.* new laws muſt be aſſumed, and the old relinquiſhed. We cannot mean that the laws will be changed in any other ſenſe; their own neceſſity will remain, as hath been ſaid, whether their objects remain fixed to them or not. If the objects after changing return to the ſtate they were before in, their old laws of fitneſs will neceſſarily become their laws again.

but
Subjects of relation are mutable; except God, time, and ſpace are immutable. The relations, the fitneſſes, and unfitneſſes, pertaining to theſe three, if conſidered abſtractedly from all other beings, are in many reſpects immutable; becauſe the ſubjects of them are ſo. But the relations betwixt them and other beings muſt be mutable (*i. e.* in the ſenſe of *exchanging* as above obſerved) becauſe mutable are the ſubjects to which the relations refer.

Laws of fitneſs are diſtinguiſhed into *phyſical* and *moral*. Phyſical laws are thoſe, whoſe ſubjects are bound by a neceſſity in the ſubjects to adhere to thoſe laws. Moral laws are thoſe, whoſe ſubjects are not bound by neceſſity to adhere to thoſe laws; but have freedom to obey them or to diſobey.

The human mind, in compariſon of the divine intellect, is capable of knowing but few relations; and has but an imperfect apprehenſion of ſeveral known; but ſo well is it adapted to its principal end, it has facility the moſt in diſcovering moral relations. Though it cannot ſo well demonſtrate them, nor always ſo exactly define, as it can mathematical relations; becauſe the firſt admit not, as the laſt do, of being aſcertained by permanent ſigns; and alſo becauſe the firſt are perpetually ſhifting with

circumſtances; yet it can apprehend them as clearly as the mathematical, and more readily, in all caſes of immediate utility.

It has been already ſaid, that phyſical relations are thoſe, whoſe ſubjects are bound by neceſſity in the ſubjects to adhere to the laws: it has alſo been ſaid, that this phyſical neceſſity is in ſome inſtances immutable in the ſenſe of unexchangeable, viz. where the ſubject is ſo; but is mutable or exchangeable in mutable ſubjects, viz. in all *created* ſubſtances. How God is bound by phyſical neceſſity, (*i. e.* by a neceſſity in his own nature) to adhere to certain laws, I will not enquire: he is certainly bound, with reſpect to his creatures, only by moral neceſſity; for he can make his creatures, or not make them; and can alter them as he pleaſes. The only neceſſity he is under reſpecting them, ariſes from his own purpoſes. If he purpoſes to make them, he is conſequently bound to purſue ſuch laws of fitneſs, as his purpoſe requires, otherwiſe his end cannot be attained; and when they are made, he is bound to treat them according to the natures he hath given them; *i. e.* according to the laws of fitneſs, which he adopted in making them. All this is by moral neceſſity conſequential to his own choſen purpoſe. He can, by no will or power, annihilate the laws of fitneſs; but he can vary his creatures from the laws they are in to other laws: he can give them new relations. He cannot deviate from the laws of fitneſs reſpecting a creature, while the relations, founded on them, continue, (*i. e.* while the creature remains the ſame) without fruſtrating the purpoſe for which the creature was made. In ſome inſtances he cannot deviate without forfeiting his moral rectitude.

The relations, pertaining to God's attributes, viz. his power, wiſdom, goodneſs, are independent on his will, ſave only in their uſe; and by his nature are immutable. From the abſolute perfection of his attributes, and the laws neceſſarily adhering thereto, ſome have concluded, that God muſt, by a moral neceſſity, conſequential to his perfection, *make every thing the beſt that is poſſible.* I ſee no reaſon obliging him to this: I perceive no laws of moral fitneſs, founded in his perfections, which muſt conclude him to make every one of his creatures the beſt that is poſſible; I think any ſuch law would encroach upon his juſt freedom. There is rather a law of fitneſs, which leads him to make a difference among his creatures, and alſo a difference among the ſyſtems of his creatures: a law, I mean, which leads him to give variety of qualities to his creatures; and alſo to give degrees of qualities in thoſe qualities which admit of degrees. Moral fitneſs requires of him no more, than that he do his creatures no injuſtice. Now the leaſt benefit is a favour; and nothing is injuſtice, but miſery undeſerved or unrewarded.

It was obſerved in notes 18 and 20 of the preceding Book, that ſuppoſing *probation for the glory of God* to be the ultimate end of creation, God ſcarcely could make things on other principles, than thoſe (I mean general ones) on which they are made. From the end given it follows by conſequential neceſſity, that the general principles (being means to this end) muſt be what they are: they have a pre-exiſtent fitneſs to it, and are, perhaps, the only laws of fitneſs, competent to the given end. The creatures of courſe muſt have, as to general properties, ſuch natures as they have; muſt be phyſically and morally related and united as they are, or

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in ſome way equivalent. In other words, there muſt in the ſyſtem be phyſical neceſſity and moral freedom mixed; for firſt, phyſical neceſſity is neceſſary to form the connection of things in any ſuppoſable ſyſtem: and next, freedom is neceſſary to be added, to give due utility to phyſical neceſſity; and to diſplay, and give room for the exerciſe of, God's moral attributes. In exerciſing his moral attributes muſt be exerciſed his phyſical alſo, and diſplayed more advantageouſly than they could be otherwiſe. Thus it appears, that, to manifeſt his attributes, God is bound by conſequential neceſſity, reſpecting that end, to create both phyſical and moral creatures. And it appears, that a moral ſyſtem is better, than one wholly phyſical; and that the beſt ſyſtem poſſible *muſt* be moral.

But ſince God is at liberty to create or not to create; and, if he creates, is free to create as he pleaſes; it follows, that he may create a ſyſtem not moral, but wholly phyſical; and in ſo doing ſhall incur no imputation of committing impropriety. All the neceſſity that he is under, is a conſequential neceſſity; *i. e.* it riſes conſequent to his own free purpoſe. When he forms a ſyſtem, he binds his creatures to adhere to the laws he hath choſen to build upon: *i. e.* he binds them phyſically, be the ſyſtem what it may; and if it be a moral ſyſtem, he binds them morally. And, let me add, he alſo in conſequence binds himſelf; he binds himſelf to act ſuitably to the natures he hath beſtowed. The relations, put between their natures and his, are neceſſarily founded on neceſſary laws, laws independent of will and power either in him or in them; and binding (neceſſarily binding) both parties, ſo long as the natures of both parties continue the ſame. Nay, every change in the natures muſt be made conſonant to laws of fitneſs, ſo as to juſtify divine rectitude: in aſſuming new laws there muſt be a fit progreſſion, a fit permutation, obſerved by him, with reſpect to the laws phyſical and moral, which he originally adopted. To this, I ſay, by a neceſſity of fitneſs conſequential to his own free choice, God is bound himſelf.

With regard to the ſyſtem we belong to, there appears to be a conſequential neceſſity, founded in the original plan of it, that a fall be poſſible, and on a fall happening, that a redeemer be required. In conſequence of this ordination, many changes have happened, and many more will happen.

But God is not bound to make ſuch a ſyſtem as ours. He may make one merely phyſical; or he may make one moral, very different from ours. All the obligation upon him ariſes in conſequence of his own purpoſe. Whatever ſyſtem he deſigns, he is conſequentially bound to act by laws of fitneſs, neceſſary to accompliſh his deſign.

If he propoſes to make a ſyſtem merely mechanical, the laws, which he is inevitably bound to, are theſe: 1ſt. That he create matter or ſolid parts. Now parts neceſſarily infer figure, ſize and number; therefore, 2dly. he muſt give figure, ſize and number. But he is free to modify figure, ſize and number. However, he is neceſſarily bound, 3dly. to give modes of figure and ſize ſuitable to his deſign; and likewiſe to give number of parts neceſſary to the ſame. And 4thly. he is neceſſarily bound to link the whole together by competent union; which laſt effect neceſſarily requires a mutual fitneſs of the parts for ſuch union to be admitted; and 5thly. he muſt add proper motion.

If he propoſes to make a ſyſtem moral, the laws he is inevitably bound to are theſe—1ſt. To proper mechaniſm he muſt add ſenſe and free agency. No morality can poſſibly exiſt without theſe: but morality may exiſt with theſe, without any farther requiſites. Other qualities may be added: and the added qualities muſt be adjuſted by laws ſuitable to the deſign of them, laws phyſical and moral. We muſt obſerve, that ſenſe and free-agency are not neceſſarily implied in ſolidity, number, and figure; therefore, when ſenſe and free-agency are added, they are added as God pleaſes, under no neceſſity but the intention of God in the uſe of them. Whether ſenſe and free-agency can exiſt, independent of ſolidity, is uncertain. Next obſerve, there is no neceſſary connection between ſenſe and free-agency; therefore the one might be given without the other, did not the deſign of a moral ſyſtem require, that they muſt be joined. 2dly. In a moral ſyſtem, God may, to the preceding qualities, add pleaſure and pain: not that pleaſure and pain are eſſential to every poſſible idea of a moral ſyſtem; but becauſe no moral ſyſtem can be deemed complete in its kind without one or both of them. There ought to be pleaſure in a moral ſyſtem: for what is a ſyſtem without happineſs? In ſuch a ſyſtem alſo the exiſtence of pain ought to be poſſible, though not real, in order that pain may riſe into exiſtence, if moral delinquency call for it. Pleaſure, if not neceſſary to moral actions, is however very fit, in order to incite to action, to try integrity, and to reward probity. Pain, no leſs, if guilt gets entrance, is very fit, in order to incite to action, to try virtue, and puniſh vice. Reward and puniſhment cannot well take place without pleaſure and pain: ſo in a moral ſyſtem, pleaſure and pain muſt properly be prepared; and that by laws phyſical, operating by the direction of laws moral, juſtly ſuitable to the ultimate end of the ſyſtem. Be it underſtood, that pleaſure and pain are not neceſſarily implied in ſolidity, number and figure; nor yet in ſenſe and free-agency. Pleaſure and pain are qualities arbitrarily added to the qualities preceding. However, without ſenſe neither pleaſure nor pain can exiſt: though ſenſe does not neceſſarily imply pleaſure and pain; yet they imply ſenſe. Again obſerve, that pleaſure and pain have no neceſſary connection betwixt themſelves; one does not imply the other: no, nor can they both ariſe from the ſame mode of relation betwixt the ſenſe feeling them and the object that occaſions them. The two qualities are totally diſtinct, inſomuch that it is not poſſible for the ſame relation of ſenſe and object to produce both pleaſure and pain. They are often indeed found exiſting at the ſame time in the ſame being: but by quite different cauſes; cauſes which are eaſily conceivable to be ſeparable. They are, when joined, arbitrarily joined; and, ſo far as reſpects the divine intention, they are arbitrarily joined for ſome moral view. I conclude with obſerving, that all theſe qualities muſt be imparted with an intention towards ſome final cauſe, ſome ultimate ſcope, which infers a conſequential neceſſity for their exiſting: and the laws of fitneſs, neceſſarily adopted in conſequence of God's freely chooſing ſuch final cauſe, and by which laws the whole is faſhioned and adjuſted, are thenceforth binding both to God and his creatures.

The laws of fitneſs, thus ſolemnly aſſumed, are the laws of nature, the laws of reaſon, which every rational creature is bound, to the extent of its ability, to ſtudy and purſue.

THE END.